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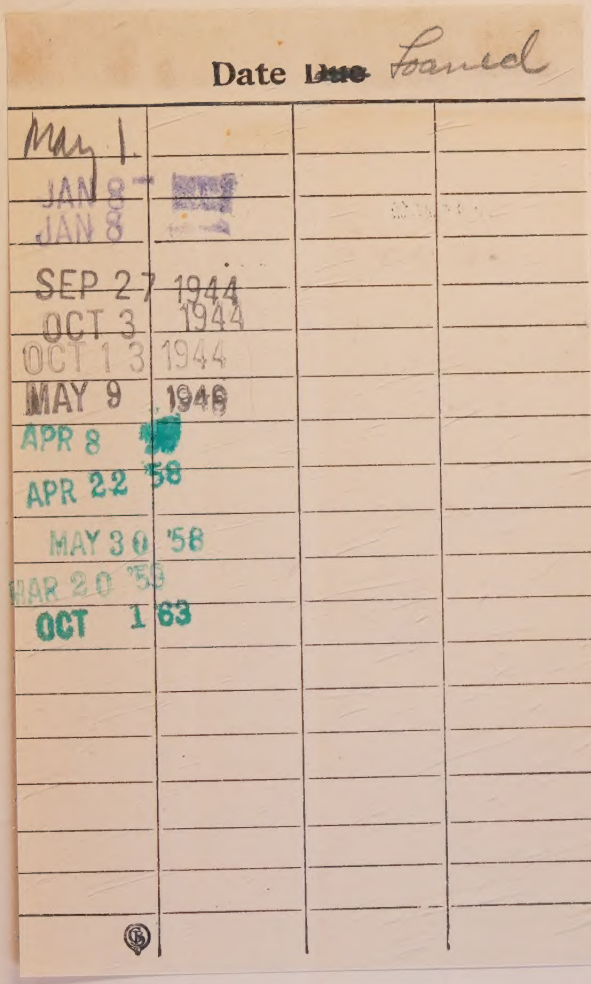

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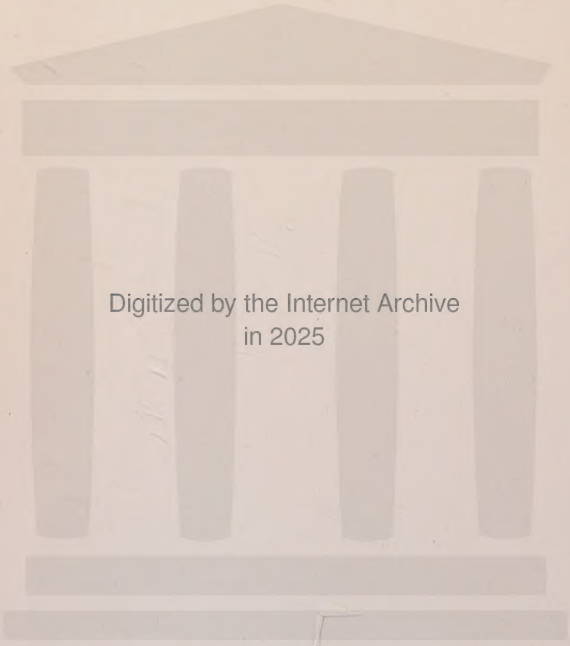

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LIBERAL CHRISTIANITY
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LIBERAL CHRISTIANITY AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

A STUDY OF OBJECTIVES IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

BY

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PREFACE

I AM glad to have opportunity to point out both the importance and the timeliness of the investigation that is reported in this book.

We are living within what is perhaps the most serious crisis that the Christian religion has had to confront. The most serious because everything that our religion has held precious, literally everything, is subjected to re-examination from new points of view. The dominance of the scientific method; the evolutionary view of all life, man's whole cultural life included; critical historical methods employed in the study of the Bible and of all religions; the overwhelming social issues precipitated by modern industrialism —all these are forces that play upon the very brain and the very heart of religion. Momentous changes are bound to occur either within Christian thought and experience, or else in the position of Christianity within Western culture.

Whether Christianity will take up into itself these modern developments, permitting itself to be changed accordingly; or whether, resisting change, it will isolate itself from scientific and ethical culture; or whether we shall have henceforth two or more sorts of Christianity, remains to be seen. But the issues are becoming definite, and they are beginning to be argued in the court of the laity.

One new type of thought, conscious of itself as Christian, has disengaged itself from customary restraints. It is characterized by (*a*) a determination to think the problem of life anew under the presuppositions of modern science, (*b*) appreciation of the new social issues, and (*c*) a conviction that life-principles inherent in the religion of Jesus are of permanent and commanding value. These three marks will serve to identify, in a general way, what is called liberal theology.

The scene of the present crisis is not merely the theologian's study and classroom. Religious living as well as theological thinking is involved. The use of the Bible, the apprehension of God, prayer, the fellowship and worship of the church, daily conduct and the meaning of duty—all are affected. Now, as these are matters for the common consciousness of the laity, it necessarily follows that a first-magnitude problem of religious education is upon our hands. Whether one accepts the liberal position or not, one encounters the issues, and one makes some sort of adjustment to them. Even conservatives, therefore, have reason to add something to the indoctrination, accompanied by incitements to individualistic piety, that has characterized the Sunday school. On the other hand, for liberals who really expect the laity to assimilate and live liberal Christianity the problem is nothing less than that of providing for the young a fundamentally reconstructed educational experience.

What, then, has been done to provide this necessary religious intelligence and this reconstructed ex-

perience? Do the young, even within broad-minded congregations, have opportunity to grow up intelligently liberal and socially consecrated? Does current practice provide enough information to produce even intelligent conservatives? How many questions in the whole field of religious education are as important as this? Dr. Case's work is the only one that answers it.

This investigation is peculiarly timely as well as important. It is timely not only because our social strains are increasing, but also because of the resurgence in America of religious conflicts that most of us supposed we had left behind for good. How far could these conflicts have been obviated if religious education, for the last quarter-century, had aimed definitely at religious intelligence? In any case, our only hope of anything better than a skin-deep and therefore impermanent healing of our discords, is popular religious education that, in point of thought and of ethical experience, is genuinely fundamental; for appeal is being made to the laity on basic issues. These issues have to be faced in legislative bodies both civil and ecclesiastical, in the administration of congregations, and in personal religious living. Even the secular news sheets are peddling religious discussions. In a situation like this it is timely to ask, as Dr. Case has done: Does current religious education fit the people at large for the tasks of religious adjustment that already are upon them?

Before treatment, diagnosis! Let us not hasten to prescribe changes in curriculum and method until we

ascertain our internal condition and scan our present resources. This book is for those who appreciate painstaking educational diagnosis. But I have no hesitation in saying that, whether one's convictions be liberal or conservative, the outcomes of this study will indicate to any Christian educator the shortest road to his goal.

GEORGE A. COE.

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LIBERAL CHRISTIANITY
AND
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

LIBERAL CHRISTIANITY AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

One of the most conspicuous features in the life of Protestantism in America in the last twenty years has been the movement for religious education.[1] Departments of religious education have been organized in nearly all the large denominations. Colleges and universities, in steadily increasing numbers, are creating professorships and offering courses in religious education. Professionally trained workers are uniting in organizations. Recent developments such as Daily Vacation Bible Schools and Week Day Schools of Religion have set up machinery (special equipment, textbooks, administrative bodies, etc.) for their distinctive functions. Buildings specially designed for religious education are being constructed. An immense amount

[1] 1903, the year in which the Religious Education Association was organized, may be taken as a convenient date to mark the rise of this movement. The teaching of religion is of course nothing new, and religious education in a non-technical sense has always been characteristic of Christianity.

of literature is published every year. Promotion agencies are spreading rapidly. With an efficiency which in its administrative aspects approaches, if it does not equal, the proverbial efficiency of American business interests, Protestantism in America has been organizing for religious education.[2]

The last twenty years, in which these developments in religious education have taken place, have witnessed likewise a great acceleration of another and larger movement which has been going on within Protestant churches for half a century,[3]—a movement which aims at nothing less than a reconstruction of Protestantism itself. That there has been profound discontent with traditional Christianity, even an upheaval within the ranks of Christianity, is clear from evidences on all sides. A distinguished professor of history began a series of lectures to college students in 1913 with the words:

> We are in the midst of a religious revolution! The "old régime" of immemorial belief and custom is vanishing before our eyes. Faiths so old that they come to us from

[2] See foreword in *Religious Education,* June, 1923. "Feverish activity marks the production of text-books, the propaganda for new organizations, the advocacy of novel methods and the agitation for enlarged institutions." An account of the rapid development of the movement for Religious Education will be found in the report, "Twenty Years' Progress in Religious Education," by Henry F. Cope, published in *Religious Education* for October, 1923. See also President Arlo Brown's *A History of Religious Education in Recent Times,* published in 1923.

[3] Darwin published *The Origin of Species* in 1859.

the prehistoric world are yielding to the discoveries of yesterday. Institutions that have embodied these faiths and held the allegiance of the civilized world are now crumbling to pieces or transforming themselves wherever the new forces of revolution touch and penetrate. (James T. Shotwell, *The Religious Revolution of Today*, p. 1.)

The same position is taken by a sociologist who, writing on religion, says, "Like all other institutions, religion is in revolution."[4] Both of these men hold that any progress in religion must involve acceptance of, and not opposition to, the revolutionary changes that are taking place throughout our culture. The historian's attitude is stated as follows:

So it is possible that the revolution which we are analysing may offer for the onward march some such inspiration out of the very heart of its very destructive forces.

One thing is sure, that inspiration must be found there or not at all. It must be armed with the strength of the conqueror, not with the mere protest of defeat. (Shotwell, *The Religious Revolution*, p. 150.)

The sociologist who has been quoted maintains a more positive thesis:

But the religious revolution has now given religion the opportunity to become a dynamic rather than a static thing—to become "experimental," as it were; at least, to base itself upon the experience and needs of men in a present world. . . . The religious revolution need not, then, end in chaos and irreligion. It can and should end,

[4] Charles A. Ellwood, *The Reconstruction of Religion*, p. 1.

if guided by intelligence, in a new era of rational religious faith. (Ellwood, *The Reconstruction of Religion,* p. 30.)[5]

Certain groups within Protestant churches recognize the elements of change, at the same time earnestly deploring them. An admirably clear exposition of this attitude is found in a recent book from which the following is quoted:

> In the sphere of religion, in particular, the present time is a time of conflict. The great redemptive religion which has always been known as Christianity is battling against a totally diverse type of religious belief, which is only the more destructive of the Christian faith because it makes use of traditional Christian terminology. (J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism,* p. 2.)

Again from the same (p. 177):

> The present is a time not for ease or pleasure, but for earnest and prayerful work. A terrible crisis unquestionably has arisen in the Church. In the ministry of evangelical churches are to be found hosts of those who reject the gospel of Christ.

Recognized from outside Protestantism, recognized and attacked from within, the movement for religious reconstruction is exceedingly significant. Although among its supporters there are differences in point of view, its general outlines are reasonably clear. It has grown historically from an effort to reconcile

[5] It is of course not suggested that these views are held by all historians or sociologists. They are quoted as representing opinions of leaders in fields other than that of religion.

Christianity with "the two outstanding facts in our civilization—science and democracy." [6] Not only does it refuse to recognize any incompatibility between science and religion, but it insists upon the religious character of scientific investigation itself and desires increasing scientific knowledge and control within its own field. A statement of this attitude is found in Dr. Gerald B. Smith's *Social Idealism and the Changing Theology* where he says (p. 92):

> Theological scholarship in Protestant seminaries is rapidly committing itself without reserve to the scientific method, which means the ideal of searching for truth without pledging oneself beforehand to uphold the doctrines approved by the church.

See also on p. 173:

> The scientific ideal is gaining such control that it must be reckoned with as the approved method of formulating conclusions in the realm of religious belief.

Convinced of the value of the Christian religion for the progress of humanity, this movement seeks to interpret the principles of Jesus in terms of the issues of our present civilization:

> If, then, Christianity is sincerely interested in the quality of human spirits, in the motives and ideals which dominate personality, she must be interested in the economic and industrial problems of our day. (Fosdick, *Christianity and Progress*, p. 11.)

[6] Ellwood, p. 2. See especially chapters 1, 5 and 11.

The movement for reconstruction is impatient with the restrictions of ecclesiasticism but it desires no break with historic Christianity, holding that liberalism represents the inevitable next step in Christian progress. Its point of view involves a series of shifts in emphasis, the full significance of which is just beginning to be felt. In general, it is less concerned with the restatement or rejection of traditional dogmas—though much has been attempted along this line—than with the recognition of Christianity as a dynamic factor in the moral progress of humanity. Dr. William Austin Smith expressed this position when he said:

> When the Church shall be willing to take some of the magic out of the doctrine of the Incarnation, and put morality in it, we shall make religion a more effective implement of fellowship. (*War and the Churches,* pamphlet, p. 8.)

It tends to define its concepts less in theological terms than in terms of social psychology and ethics. Its standards are social standards and its goal the creation of a new human society, the *democracy* or the *commonwealth* of God. It is even interpreted as not primarily a reform movement, not remedial, but radical and creative. The word "radical" has however somewhat confusing connotations; so too with the word "modernist." "Progressive" means little or nothing. In spite of their awkwardness, the terms

"liberal Christianity" and "the liberal movement" are probably the most clearly understood.[7]

It is the purpose of this study to consider the mutual relationship of these two developments in modern Protestantism,—the movement for religious education and the movement for the reconstruction of religion. In particular it will be concerned with *objectives*, and will address itself to the inquiry: To what extent has Protestant religious education adopted the educational purposes implied in the liberal movement?

Five lines of investigation will be undertaken:

1. First, we shall seek to discover *the distinctive positions of liberal Christianity*. For this purpose the writings of numerous authors recognized as liberal will be examined. Since, in the nature of the case, few of these writings discuss education, we must search for their religious points of view and from them infer the *educational objectives that are implied.*

2. *Objectives as defined by leading writers in religious education* will then be examined. We shall need to know to what extent these leaders recognize and adopt the positions of liberal Christianity.

[7] It is not maintained that this tendency toward religious reconstruction is the sole or dominant tendency in Protestant thought today. Further, it is the function of this study neither to acclaim nor condemn this movement but simply to note its existence. The writer has no wish, however, to conceal the fact that her own views are in substantial sympathy with those of Protestant liberalism.

3. The next step will be to inquire whether *the objectives announced by organizations for religious education* represent adequately the purposes implicit in the liberal movement.

4. We shall then be ready to examine *curriculum objectives*—the aims as stated in textbooks used by leading Protestant denominations—to ascertain whether they show a recognition of the issues important for liberal Christianity and an attempt to meet them from the liberal point of view.

5. There will remain the question whether workers in Protestant religious education—many of whom are trained by educational leaders, represent organizations for religious education, and use denominational textbooks—are themselves prepared to deal with the facts and standards involved in the liberal movement. We shall therefore undertake a brief inquiry into the *competency of religious workers to deal with the objectives of liberal Christianity.*

The conclusion, in addition to summarizing the evidence presented, will interpret the significance of it and will offer a few practical suggestions for the reconstruction of Protestant religious education.

CHAPTER II

The Distinctive Positions of Liberal Christianity and Their Implied Educational Objectives

What are the distinctive positions of liberal Christianity and what are the objectives for religious education implied in these positions? While it is true that a specific type of religion requires for its self-maintenance and growth a specific type of religious education, yet the educational objectives that are implicit in liberalism have never been stated in any definite and comprehensive fashion. The reasons are these: (1) The recognized field of religion has broadened so enormously that it becomes difficult to set up distinctive objectives. (2) Liberalism is in its essential nature a progressive movement, always changing, always in flux; its conclusions are never fixed or static; it has no unalterable "deposit of faith" to teach. It does not desire uniformity of opinion.[1]

[1] "The very essence of Protestantism is the recognition that we have not reached finality, but must be ever seeking." (McGiffert, A Teaching Church, in *Religious Education,* Feb., 1921, p. 6.)

"Not *semper idem* but *semper alterum* is the keynote of science. Each discovery of something new involves the dis-

(3) Until recently the element of protest in liberal thinking has often loomed so large as partially to obscure its constructive contributions. Teachers have seen more clearly what not to do than what to teach or how to teach. (4) Many, if not most, liberal writers have been preoccupied with ultimate aims, with the great vision of a redeemed humanity; they have not concerned themselves with immediate objectives. Pointing in the general direction of the City of God, they have failed to give the traveler guidance for the next turn in the road. (5) Many leaders and writers take a thoroughly liberal position along certain lines without recognizing its implications elsewhere. One sees, for instance, a church school where scientific Bible study is carried on but where results of the scientific study of educational processes are obviously unknown.[2] (6) Incorrect accounts of liberalism

carding of something old. Above all it progresses by doubting rather than believing." (James T. Shotwell, *The Religious Revolution of Today,* p. 101.)

[2] Instances of similar inconsistencies abound. W. H. Fitchett, in *Where the Higher Criticism Fails,* says, on p. 9, "An intelligent Christian must be willing, not only frankly, but gladly, to accept every conclusion about the Bible which has adequate historic proof." Later (p. 10), he declares his belief "that Moses wrote the Pentateuch" although not the account of his own funeral with which the story closes. Bishop Manning, in his *Address of the Bishop in the Convention of the Diocese of New York,* May 8, 1923, insists that he has no quarrel with science. Thus, on p. 4, "The supposed conflict between science and religion which for some decades has tended to chill religious faith is seen now to have no reality," and on p. 6, "We find nothing in the

are sometimes heard from those of its opponents who are willing to make specific charges without sufficient evidence. This leads to general confusion. A statement in some detail of the outstanding positions characteristic of liberal Christianity and a summary of the purposes of religious education that may be inferred from them, is therefore very much needed.

Investigation of recent writings of liberal Protestants [3] reveals *certain issues* as the immediate, necessary concern in their opinion, of Christian leaders and teachers. Such a study further reveals distinct points of view in dealing with these issues. Both the issues and the ways of dealing with them are significant for determining the objectives of religious education.

The issues recognized may be conveniently classified under the following headings:

I The Bible; II Theological Dogmas; III The Historical Jesus; IV Social Welfare; V The Reconstruction of Society; VI The Political State; VII International and Inter-racial Problems; VIII Human Nature; IX The Educational Process; X The Church. In the

Christian faith which conflicts with the scientific theory of evolution;" but he goes on (p. 7) to affirm belief in traditional dogmas including the Virgin Birth as necessary for ministers in his church, and asserts that there is "no room for difference" in these matters.

[3] Only those who are widely recognized as representative of groups within the Protestant churches in the United States are quoted. Religious leaders who are outside the fellowship of Protestantism are not included; and leaders in Canada and England only if their writings are very generally known and read in this country.

nature of the case these divisions can not be completely exclusive of one another, but the overlapping need not lead to confusion.

In this and the following chapter we shall endeavor to set forth the points of view of liberal writers on these issues, with a sufficient number of citations to give breadth and definiteness to our inquiry. At the end of each chapter, the educational objectives implicit in the positions described will be briefly indicated.

I. The Bible[4]

1. Liberalism encourages historical method in Biblical criticism and accepts without equivocation the results of scientific inquiry. In *Reconstruction in Theology,* President King of Oberlin defines this type of research:

> Positively, higher criticism may be defined as a careful historical and literary study of a book to determine its unity, age, authorship, literary form and reliability. (P. 112.)

Professor Charles F. Kent points out its value for clarifying one's knowledge of the original sources:

> Interpreted in the light of contemporary literature and language, most of the obscurities of the Old Testament melt away. Modern research in the fields of Semitic philology

[4] "The Church is undoubtedly passing quietly through a revolution in its conception and attitude toward the Bible, more fundamental and far-reaching than that represented by its precursor, the Protestant Reformation; but its real significance is daily becoming more apparent." (Kent: *Origin and Permanent Value of the Old Testament,* p. 16.)

and syntax and the discovery of older texts and versions have put into the hands of the translators new and valuable tools for making clear to all the thoughts in the minds of the original writers of the Old Testament. (Kent: *Origin and Permanent Values of the Old Testament,* p. 12.)

and specifically on the New Testament:

The gospels, like the historical books of the Old Testament, embody older oral and written sources which reflect the earliest impression that Jesus' personality and words made on the minds of his followers. The first step, therefore, in the quest of the real Jesus is to distinguish and to separate these oldest records from the later variant accounts which blur or conceal the original portrait. The more vital the questions involved, the more important is it that the records be carefully studied and tested by the most thorough methods known to modern historical research. (Kent: *The Life and Teachings of Jesus,* preface, p. v.)

In his very careful description of the historical method in connection with the New Testament, Dr. Moffatt emphasizes the openmindedness with which it must be approached:

In the department of New Testament study, as elsewhere, the historical method has to maintain its rights over and again. Mainly against two encroaching theories. One is that the function of historical research is to provide evidence for foregone dogmatic conclusions. This would mean the very death of the historical spirit in the study of the New Testament. . . .

We shall return to this point in a moment. Meantime, we observe that the other foe is the *a priori* abstract method,

which develops an idea of Christianity out of special considerations, till it really matters little or nothing what has happened in history. (James Moffatt: *The Approach to the New Testament,* pp. 143, 144. See especially Chapters V, VI, VII, and VIII.)

2. Historical and scientific study has led liberals to discard the "authority of the Bible" in the usually accepted sense.

In these later days God has taken the Bible from the throne of infallibility on which Protestantism sought to place it. (Kent: *Origin and Permanent Value of the Old Testament,* p. 32.)

Students of the rediscovered Old Testament also recognize, in the light of a broader and more careful study, the fact, so often and so fatally overlooked in the past, that its authority lies not in the field of natural science, not even of history in the limited sense. (Kent: *Ibid.,* p. 26.)

3. Liberal writers lay much less stress on the miracles of both Old and New Testament than has been the custom in the past. There are several possible explanations for this: (1) The growth of the scientific outlook on life implies the recognition of the uniformity of causal law. (2) Scientific criticism—the investigation of manuscripts, study of contemporary customs, etc.—has made it possible to trace the development of some of the miracle stories and to understand how the events to which they refer may have taken place without the interposition of supernatural powers. (3) No doubt one of the reasons that miracles are not emphasized is due to the

fact that liberals are in general more interested in moral values than in accounts of physical marvels.

The modern man cannot conceive of any break in the causal, genetic process. True, he is ready to admit that there may be events which are not yet located in any of its known formulas, but in such a conception there is no place for that which, before its recent apologetic manipulation, the word miracle stood—an event out of its causal series. (Shailer Mathews: *The Gospel and the Modern Man,* p. 46.)

And, above all, the modern mind has been led to feel that the identification of religion with the acceptance of marvelous events degrades religion from a supreme spiritual experience to an acceptance of belief in a non-rational universe. So there are many who feel that insistence upon miracles is deadening to the expansion of faith. (Leighton Parks, *What Is Modernism?* p. 33.)

The further back we go towards barbarous superstition, the more prominent becomes the conception of prodigy as the only method by which divine operation can be known. The nearer we approach to the reverent interpretation of it in our own times, the more is God conceived to act in accordance with the uniformity of nature. Even when events occur inexplicable according to natural law as thus far known, we do not expect them to *remain* unintelligible. We expect the naturalist will sooner or later discover the process, and while science as such is voluntarily self-limited to the study of secondary causes, we think the knowledge of these only a help to the theologian. God as we know Him, the real and living God in whom we actually live and move and have our being, is "not a God of confusion" but of intelligibility, of order and law.

. . . In principle there is no reason why we should not apply the method of historical interpretation to biblical accounts of miracle precisely as we apply it in the case of witchcraft, or demon possession, or in the expectation of an immediately impending dissolution of the world. Miracle is no longer to us a necessary mode of divine revelation. (Benjamin W. Bacon, The Success and Failure of Liberalism, in the *Yale Review,* Oct. 1923, pp. 91, 92.)

4. The great value of the Biblical records as religious literature lies in the fact that they are a description of growth in religious experience.

The Bible is permeated with the spirit of growth; growth of the world and its peoples, of their customs, institutions, laws, moral and religious progress. Because of this spirit it is most sympathetically interpreted by means of the concept of development. Unconsciously, we are invited by our experience with these Scriptures to think of life's problems in the light of progress. This is so true that any bad or backward person or standard of action in the Bible is best judged by standards further on in the book. Both the Old and the New Testaments record movements of the spirit which suggest that man is approaching ever nearer to the destiny of a moral being in a world of personality as well as one of material forces. So then, though a book cannot keep pace with advances in knowledge, it may be congenial with the mood of essential, advancing humanity. The germ and the logic of an incalculable improvement are of the very genius of the Bible. (Elihu Grant, What Shall We Think of the Bible? in [Rufus Jones ed.] *Religious Foundations,* pp. 88, 89.)

The inconsistencies and imperfect teachings which are revealed by a critical study of the Old Testament are also

but a few of the many indices that it is the record of a gradually unfolding revelation. (Kent: *Origin and Permanent Value of the Old Testament,* p. 29.)

The fallacy at the heart of the situation was the failure to recognize the fact that the Old Testament is a record of progress. The accounts which it contains of the making of the world are true in the sense of being true records of what the Hebrews thought about these matters, several thousand years ago. But mankind would be dull indeed if after all these centuries of residence upon this planet we know no more about it than was known a thousand years before Christ in the Mediterranean provinces of Asia. (George Hodges: *How to Know the Bible,* p. 12.)

5. A most striking point in the writings of liberals is the fact that they are enormously interested in the life and teachings of Jesus. They are seeking to discover Jesus the Galilean as he really was, apart from the presuppositions of Judaistic tradition and the accretions of Pauline theology. To them the Gospels are of unique significance. The results of their study will be discussed under Topic III (pp. 33-36). It should be recognized here, however, that for liberals the Bible is supremely important because it contains records, however fragmentary, of the life of Jesus.

It is because the Modernist believes that the reality of the historic Jesus has been obscured by the mists of theological speculation that he is desirous of finding, if possible, what is the bedrock fact in the Gospel narrative. (Leighton Parks, *What Is Modernism?* p. 13.)

It is a pity that our sympathies and prejudices weaken our appreciation of Jesus as an historical force. But such

he must be considered by any historian of modern culture. If we could rid ourselves of all conventional attitudes and professional language with its suggestion of cant, our appreciation of Jesus would be seen to be no expression of ecclesiastical bigotry, but a thoroughly objective estimate of his place in the progress of human life from the physical to the spiritual. Theology, important as it is to religion, must ultimately shape itself within the limits set by religious-social experience in which faith in personal values ever more perfectly revealed in history and in the cosmos has its indispensable office.

When we thus approach the spiritual history of modern times we are at once struck with the failure of professed Christian thought and idealism to appreciate Jesus as a teacher, or, better, revealer of elemental spiritual laws. Christians have been very keen to believe the gospel *about* Jesus but they have not been so eager to receive the gospel *of* Jesus. Even a superficial examination of Christian thought and dogma will make this plain. It is certainly most remarkable that only within the last century while democracy has really been in the making have men seriously begun to study the words and life of the Jesus of the Gospels. (Shailer Mathews, *The Spiritual Interpretation of History,* pp. 208, 209.)

6. With the discriminating attitude of science—the weighing of evidence to determine dates, authorship, etc.—liberal Protestants would unite an attitude of ethical discrimination which seeks to evaluate individuals, historic events, the theology, the poetry, and drama, of the Bible, on the basis of the ethical standards of Jesus.

This point of view is described by Dean Hodges, who said:

When Jesus told the disciples that Elijah was mistaken, he liberated us from allegiance to the Old Testament, and bound us only to New Testament truth,—to Old Testament truth certified by the knowledge and spirit we are of. When we encounter errors of statement and deficiencies of doctrine in these pages we are not to shut our eyes to them, or to conceal them, to deny them, or to behave ourselves in any unnatural or insincere manner. We are to follow the example of his frankness. Out of bondage to these ancient books, he has set us free. (George Hodges: *How to Know the Bible,* p. 21.)

Such an attitude brings into prominence historical records, which, although they deal with an important period in the life of the Hebrew people, have been neglected because they have been regarded as uncanonical—notably the heroic accounts of the Maccabean period.

Professor Kent emphasizes this point:

The first book of Maccabees is in many ways the best history that has come down from ancient Israel. Luther's conclusion that it was more deserving of a place in the Old Testament canon than, for example, the book of Esther, is now being widely accepted both in theory and practice. The religious spirit in which it is written, the importance of the events with which it deals, and the faithfulness with which they are recorded, all confirm this conclusion. (Kent: *Makers and Teachers of Judaism,* Vol. IV of the Historical Bible, p. 189.)

Biblical characters whom tradition has placed beyond criticism or who have been criticized seldom in the past, have been subjected to the test of Christian idealism.

To quote from Kent's *Historical Bible,* a text-book widely used among liberals:

Gifted with great possibilities and the heir of a mighty empire, Solomon, in the light of later events, proved a glittering failure both as a man and as a ruler. He who was counted by later tradition the wisest proved to be in many respects the most foolish king who ever sat on Israel's throne. (Vol. II, p. 208.)

Samson has sometimes been held up as a worthy character. This tendency, however, is dangerous. He must, of course, be measured by the standards of his age, but even so he is far from noble. . . . Samson is a signal example of a man who possessed great gifts, but failed to consecrate them to a noble cause. (Vol. II, p. 60.)

His [Paul's] picture of a pre-existent, supernatural Messiah who is to come again from heaven to judge mankind and to establish a new kingdom on earth, is very different from the simple portraits of Jesus in the oldest gospel records; but he shared these beliefs with the primitive church. They are not his unique or permanent contributions to Christianity. It is, therefore, unfortunate that Christian theology in the past has been built more on the teachings of Paul than those of Jesus. (Vol. VI, p. 236.)

Elijah's conception of Jehovah, however, appears to have been the same as that of Moses and the earlier leaders of his race. They were quite willing that Baal should be worshipped in Phœnicea; but in Jehovah's land there was no place for a heathen God. (Vol. III, p. 29.)

He [Joseph] grew up a spoiled, egotistical boy, with false ideas of life. (Vol. I, p. 126.)

7. The relationship of both Hebrew and Christian cultures, including religious beliefs, with the cultures of adjacent groups is recognized and studied. Christian tradition is seen to possess no immunity from the influence of pagan customs.

It is progressively recognizing that Christianity did not come into existence and grow up in quarantine from all pagan influence; but that, on the contrary, it felt and responded to the same historical exigencies which contributed to the making of pagan religions. (G. B. Smith, *Social Idealism and the Changing Theology,* p. 95.)

Certain parts of the Old Testament itself testify that the wealth of tradition, of institutions, of laws, and religious ideas, gradually committed to the Semitic ancestors of the Hebrews and best preserved by the Babylonians, was not lost, but, enriched and purified, has been transmitted to us through its pages. A careful comparison of the Biblical and Babylonian accounts of the creation and the flood leaves little doubt that there is a close historical connection between these accounts. (Kent: *The Origin and Permanent Value of the Old Testament,* p. 55.)

By virtue of their democracy and their appeal to universal human needs the mystery-religions proved Christianity's strongest competitor in the first century. At the same time, like Judaism and the Greek philosophies and even the emperor-worship, they did much to prepare the minds of men for the reception of Christianity. As was inevitable, when competition was so close and constant and when there was so much in them that was essentially good, they exerted a powerful influence upon Christianity, as is shown, for example, not only in the language but also in the thought of Paul and in the rites which

were ultimately adopted by the Christian Church. (Kent: *Work and Teachings of the Apostles,* Vol. VI, in the Historical Bible, p. 19.)

Our current Protestant fiction has it that our own religion rests on the Old Testament. As a matter of historical fact, it is, as to doctrines, a synthesis of about equal parts Pharisaism, Stoicism, Neo-Platonism, and the common elements in all the mystery cults. (Edwin T. Brewster, *The Understanding of Religion,* p. 127.)

8. When the Bible is released from its isolation as supernatural and super-historical, a study of the Biblical accounts of the early Christians quite naturally leads to further study of the history of Christianity up to the present day. An increased interest in all sorts of history is characteristic of our age. It is not surprising, therefore, that liberal Protestants are demanding that more attention be given to an unprejudiced historical study of the Christian movement.

Thus it has come about that in planning courses of religious study, Protestant teachers have not paid sufficient attention to what God has been doing through the Church since the year 100 A.D. The old word of Chillingworth about the Bible may or may not be true of the Protestant religion, but it certainly has been true of Protestant education. The Bible and the Bible alone has been the text book of Protestants. A generation has grown up almost completely ignorant of the history of the Church since post-Biblical times and of the forms in which Christianity finds organized expression in the world to-day. For this lack we are suffering to-day in many ways—most of all in that we have developed among Protestant Christians so

little intelligent consciousness of the Church as a whole. As a result we lack a public opinion strong enough to support those who are trying to unify the churches. To create this opinion we must teach our people the history of the Christian Church and help them to understand the origin and present significance of the main forms of contemporary Christianity. (Williams Adams Brown, *The Church in America,* p. 293.)

II. Theological Dogmas

The infrequency of references to traditional formulations of doctrine in the writings of liberal Protestants is indicative of a change of emphasis exceedingly important for religious education. Dogmas [5] were of absorbing interest to religious leaders of a few generations ago. Most of the Protestant denominations retain historic statements of doctrinal belief and make use of them in forms of worship or in ordination, reception of new members, trials for heresy, etc. But for liberals the center of interest is elsewhere. The affirmations of religion have become no less profound, no less commanding but they are of a different sort.[6] This difference is noteworthy because of its bearing upon religious education.

1. The historic creeds are considered primarily in the setting in which they were formulated. They are

[5] A dogma is understood to be "a doctrine of theology officially defined and declared to rest on divine authority." (Mathews and Smith: *Dictionary of Religion and Ethics,* p. 135.)

[6] This will be illustrated in the succeeding sections of this chapter.

not regarded in any sense as *absolute* but as *relative* to the thought forms and religious issues of their times.

Biblical criticism makes it possible for us to see how doctrines have their rise, why they change, what changes are for the better and what for the worse, and what the place of formal belief is in the total religious life of men. Tradition thus becomes the servant of the present and not its despot. (G. B. Smith, *Social Idealism and the Changing Theology,* pp. 199 and 200.)

Even the Apostles Creed was an exceedingly gradual development and required centuries to attain its present form. (Conrad H. Moehlmann, What are the Fundamentals of Christianity?, *Journal of Religion,* January, 1922, p. 22.)[7]

2. Some liberals apparently find little difficulty with traditional statements provided (a) that their historic character is recognized, (b) that large liberty of interpretation is allowed, and (c) that with them is associated the expression in conduct of Christian standards of living.

But this is a fact: in every communion, even in the Roman Catholic, to-day is a growing minority of intelligent people who have departed from the traditions of the elders and have accepted the new knowledge, and reinterpret the old creeds in the light of the facts as they have come to see them. The process of change is slower in some churches than in others, but even in the most conservative and reactionary body there is some change.

In all the churches are men who have come to see that

[7] Note this very interesting examination of the Apostles Creed and the conclusion that it dates from the 5th and 6th century and in its entirety not before the 8th.

collective life and action, rather than conformity to creed, is the basis of the church. And even as life is more important than thought, so the religious community is more vital than creeds. Creeds ought to be like guide posts along the automobile highway—to guide the traveler, not obstruct his going. So used, they are of great value. They embody the experience of many generations, an experience which if learned and heeded will keep men from error and guide them into wisdom. (John Howard Melish, in a symposium on Creeds and Truth in the *World To-morrow,* August, 1923, p. 235.)

So with any article of any historic creed or any ancient teaching of any church. We can never know too completely why men of other days thought as they did, nor too accurately what it was they thought. We shall come to no harm by conducting our present-day worship or by talking about our present-day faith in terms of the science of a bygone time, any more than by building our churches in a style that men once used also for houses and barns, so long as we understand frankly that we are using obsolete forms. Religion takes on the unreality of the discarded science only when we forget that the science is discarded and try to piece together the old garment and the new cloth. We may rightly say all the old words in honor of the old saints—provided only that we always understand precisely what the ancient worthies meant, and precisely what we mean, and precisely why the two are or are not the same. The danger lies in muddle-headed pretense of factitious agreement. (Edwin T. Brewster, *The Understanding of Religion,* p. 33.)

3. Others feel that the historic creeds are a hindrance, a block to progressive thinking—that reformulations or no formulations at all are to be preferred.

The chief objection to historic creeds is not that they compel us to believe things we have long outgrown, but that they relieve us of the responsibility of trying to put the things we now believe into teachable form. (McGiffert, A Teaching Church, in *Religious Education,* Feb., 1921, p. 6.)

The business of the church to-day is (1) to translate the basic convictions of the Christian Gospel into terms intelligible to modern minds, and (2) apply those convictions to modern circumstances. (Fosdick, in a symposium on Creeds and Truth, in the *World To-morrow,* August, 1923, p. 233.)

The way out is not the reformulation of creeds. That would only burden our descendants with a new phase of our problem. It is not openly to flout the old creeds, nor privately to whittle them away. They could be quietly dropped, both by those who believe them and by those who do not. The former especially have a duty in removing a stumbling block to true Christian progress. (Henry Cadbury, *ibid.,* p. 234.)

The great demand to-day is not for a manipulation of our inherited theology into some form more acceptable to our modern ways of thinking. It is rather for a frank disregard of inherited dogma except by way of historic evaluation and a return to the primitive gospel itself; to the gospel that founded Christianity, conquered the Roman Empire, and embodies the continuous realities of the spiritual life.

. . . Inherited orthodoxy is so colored by outgrown philosophies, pre-scientific conceptions, outgrown political ideals and prejudices, as to be unusable by many an earnest man and woman. To remodel the old house is more ex-

pensive than to tear it down and use such materials of it as are sound in erecting a new building. (Shailer Mathews, *The Gospel and the Modern Man,* p. 6.)

4. However they may differ about the usefulness of the historic creeds in the churches of the present day, liberals are generally agreed that creedal statements should never be regarded as final, and that they should not be made the test of a man's standing as a Christian or the basis of fellowship between Christians.

The trouble with the creeds is not that they claim too much, but that they say too little. They are unfortunate in their stress upon the intellectual phase of religion. They are too readily propositions of alleged fact. They ignore the categories of value and conduct, the faculties of feeling and of will. To many devout modern men and women, truth is not an objective or unchangeable reality, communicable through a statement of words. The most serious defect of the creeds is that their intention and use have so often been exclusive and defensive rather than inviting and affirmative; excommunicative, rather than communicative. Their positive, "I believe" has become in practice a negative, "Thou shalt not deny." (Henry A. Cadbury, in the symposium on Creeds and Truth in the *World To-morrow,* quoted above.)

. . . The use of the creeds as restrictive delimitations of thinking has been one of the saddest elements in religious history. (Fosdick, in the same article.)

What is the condition of belonging to this age-long and world-wide Brotherhood [the Church] united solely by that love which is the bond of perfectness, Christ has made clear! "Ye are my friends," he said, "if ye do what I have

commanded you." Obedience to Christ's commands is the only condition which Christ has prescribed for membership in the Christian Brotherhood. (Lyman Abbott, *What Christianity Means to Me,* p. 51.)

Dogma is a fingerpost which indicates the way in which religious experience is traveling; but it becomes a prison for the soul and an arrest of life when it is assumed to be the final truth of things. (Richard Roberts, *The Untried Door,* p. 72.)

But they [liberals] are united in the belief that the church is called to face all difficulties and to attempt to solve them by unfettered inquiry. They do not hold that authority and tradition have settled everything so that we have only to accept the formulas drawn up in the early centuries. (W. R. Inge, What Is a Liberal Christian? in the *Christian Century,* Dec. 15, 1921, p. 11.)

Just to the extent to which we free ourselves from the sense of the finality of the historical dogmas and forms which have grown up within the church it is possible to recognize the spirit of free inquiry and of constructive thought as harmonious with the attitude of the religion of Jesus. (Edward Scribner Ames, in *Christian Century,* April 20th, 1922, p. 492.)

Tolerance is the child of conviction and love. It never had any other parentage. To believe strongly and yet doubt one's omniscience is no small achievement, but to believe strongly and yet permit a man who does not agree with you theologically also to believe strongly, is one of the supreme achievements of the spiritual life. (Shailer Mathews, *The Gospel and the Modern Man,* p. 308.)

The great mass of people in the recital of the Creed do not understand the articles in detail. What meaning does

the average worshipper attach to the articles, "Of one substance with the Father," or "He descended into hell"? Far deeper and more spiritual bonds than the Creeds hold the Church together and inspire the people to go forward. (Lawrence, *Fifty Years,* p. 66.)

Indeed experience has convinced me that the vital test of a young man as he enters a high calling is not as to what particular doctrine he believes to-day, but what is the essential trend of his thought, what his attitude toward the ever-revealing truth; not in what he does, or thinks, but what, in the long run, he is, what spirit, character, or temper controls him. (Lawrence, *ibid.,* p. 74.)

5. The theology of liberalism has, especially in this country, been profoundly influenced by *pragmatism* and by the prevailing interest in the *social sciences* and in *functional psychology.*[8] God is defined in terms of fellowship (our Father) and of purpose (love); and communion with God includes communion with our fellow men and cannot isolate us from them. Many of the traditional terms are still used but with new meaning. For example, "salvation", "sin", "regeneration", are no longer doctrinal terms in the old sense. They are no longer thought of as relating to individuals apart from the common life, nor as having any significance apart from the ethical demands of a Christian community. This change of emphasis is indicated in the succeeding topics of this study. A few quotations here will suffice to show what is meant.

[8] See Coe: *Social Theory,* especially Ch. III, The Philosophic Setting, and Ch. X, The Social Nature of Man.

While it is wrong to think that sociology will displace theology, yet it is evident that *in so far as religion becomes a program for the transformation of this world, it must depend increasingly upon sociology.* Theology itself is, indeed, being so modified in a scientific and social direction to-day that it is now sometimes difficult, in the case of the more socially-minded of our theological thinkers, to tell where their sociology ends and their theology begins. We may safely conclude, therefore, that sociology, while not a substitute for theology, will become the ally of scientific theology in attempts at the interpretation and practical development of the religious life of man. This is surely, if one studies and compares carefully the sociological and theological literature of the present, the trend of what is actually taking place. (Charles A. Ellwood, *Christianity and Social Science,* p. 23.)

In the Christian religion, with its central emphasis upon love, prayer tends to become, wherever the constructive significance of love has not been submerged by ritualism or dogmatism, the affirmation of what may be called social universalism of essentially democratic tendency. (G. A. Coe, *The Psychology of Religion,* p. 319.)

When I was a boy I was taught that sin is a relation, not between me and my neighbor, but between me and God. Subsequent reflection has led me to regard the distinction here made as not valid. . . . The need for any such term as sin lies in the fact that we men, in addition to constructing the human society in which God and men are both sharers, also obstruct it and in some measure destroy. (Coe, *Social Theory,* p. 164.)

The church is at the parting of the way. If it gave one-tenth the attention to developing a keen edge for the conscience of the individual, to regenerating itself, to in-

terpreting the religious significance of the industrial, economic and social transformations of the present, to Christianizing all life which it has been bestowing upon correctness of dogmatic phraseology, the Kingdom of God should become a more thrilling experience for multitudes. (Moehlmann, What Are the Fundamentals of Christianity?, in *Journal of Religion,* Jan., 1922, p. 26.)

Salvation of the soul is increasingly conceived to be linked up with saving the body, the health, the habits, the ideals, the interests—indeed, the whole range of the being. Life is more and more being looked upon as a unity in which one part cannot be "saved" while the remainder is neglected and ignored. (G. H. Betts, *The New Program of Religious Education,* p. 38.)

In and through his growing participation in the creation of an ideal society the pupil will realize his fellowship with the Father. (Coe, *Social Theory,* p. 56.)

III. The Historic Jesus

The liberal attitude toward the Bible and toward traditional theology has released Jesus of Nazareth alike from the machinery of a prearranged scheme of salvation and from the dead hand of pious superstition. Jesus thus freed becomes the center of the liberal movement. Many liberals assert that he has never been adequately understood or appreciated in the past, that the way of life which he suggested has never been adequately attempted. The phrases, "Back to Jesus" and "Forward with Jesus" have been used in efforts to discover and understand the Jesus of history and to relate his life to the needs of to-day.

Important to notice in the attitude of liberals towards Jesus are: (1) their *attempt to avoid bias* of any sort with respect to the facts of his life; (2) their interest in the *moral quality* of the life he lived in distinction from his "miraculous" powers; (3) their insistence on the *social character* of his teachings; (4) their emphasis on the importance of *meeting present social issues* in the spirit of Jesus as the primary condition of fellowship with him, the Christian experience being for them the actual experience of trying out the principles of Jesus in individual and social living.

If we could approach the study of Jesus with minds free from preconceptions, we could go straight to the heart of the subject. . . . However that may be, we of the West are the heirs of our own past, and burdened as we are with a legacy of wrong thinking and false sentiments, we must needs begin by deliberately clearing away this débris. (Alfred E. Zimmern, The Rediscovery of Jesus, in the *Century Magazine*, Dec., 1923, p. 269.)

This rediscovery of Jesus carries with it a new emphasis upon the Kingdom of God as the social ideal which Jesus is seeking to realize in the world. We have seen how this ideal is being forced upon us by other influences growing out of the practical needs of the time. The new theology reinforces this emphasis by its study of the nature of the Christian religion as revealed to us in the life and teachings of its founder. It shows us that Jesus, deeply as He was concerned with the individual man, highly as He rated his value for God and his capacity for service, never conceived of him as an isolated individual. He was one of many sons, potential citizens in a society in which loving service

was to be the law of all men's life. (W. A. Brown, *The Church in America,* p. 149.)

To be a Christian to-day is to be an explorer, a discoverer. It is the great adventure of the age to find out how the principles of Jesus can be made to work in the actual tasks of life. To make work and government Christian—this is our great objective. To be a Christian to-day is not simply to accept a body of truth, not merely to live according to certain rules, but to find out how the great principles that Jesus gave mankind can be translated into character and conduct, individual and social. A new world has to be made. The one in which humanity is now living is intolerable to both our reason and our conscience. Who will dare to be a Christian? (Ward, *The Gospel for a Working World,* p. 223.)

Here is its [the church's] supreme task: not to draw up programs but to beget in men the sacrificial social-mindedness which God displays in Jesus Christ. (Shailer Mathews, *The Spiritual Interpretation of History,* p. 214.)

Weary of dispute about the person of Christ, the world is now transferring its inquiry to his great message. Perhaps if we can comprehend the message we shall know the messenger. (Faunce, *The New Horizon of State and Church,* p. 29.)

. . . We must find out who Jesus Christ is and what he wants done in this world; we must then make the venture of faith and go the whole length with him. If his teachings will not work, let us know it and no longer delude ourselves. But if they are the very wisdom of God, if they will work in the world and are the very power of God unto salvation, then let us joyfully confess him as our Lord and go whithersoever he leads. Do we really believe in Jesus

Christ? Dare we be Christians? Do we believe that the meek shall inherit the earth and that love never faileth? Dare we forsake all other masters and measures and go as far as Jesus Christ goes? This is the acid test, the supreme challenge of our time. (Samuel Zane Batten, Why Not Try Christianity, in the *Christian Century*, Sept. 6, 1923, p. 1132.)

The reader will recall that the positions of liberal writers on the three issues discussed—the Bible, theological dogmas, and the historical Jesus—have been described in order that we might discover from them the educational purposes characteristic of the liberal movement. It is true that the liberal writers cited do not, for the most part, concern themselves with the educational objectives implied in their positions. Objectives for the teaching of children and youth may, however, be inferred from the points of view that we have outlined. They will include:

1. A knowledge of the outstanding and widely accepted facts about the Bible as they are revealed by Biblical research, with specific information on important and much discussed points in both the Old and the New Testament.

2. A scientific attitude toward the Biblical records, toward nature, and toward the facts of Christian history.

3. The discovery of the character of Jesus and the nature of his teaching through a free and realistic approach to his life.

4. An acquaintance with the background that gave

Christianity its setting, the surrounding cultures, and the history of the Christian movement.

5. An evaluation, on the basis of the ethics of Jesus, of Biblical characters and incidents, religious ideas, and doctrinal statements.

6. An appreciation of the teachings of Jesus and a conscious attempt to make them effective in meeting the problems of present social life.

7. An effort to restate the "fundamentals" of Christianity in terms of ethical purpose and inclusive fellowship.

If it represents the standpoints of liberal Christianity, religious teaching will work toward the accomplishment of these purposes.

CHAPTER III

The Distinctive Positions of Liberal Christianity ane Their Implied Educational Objectives (*continued*)

IV. Social Welfare

Howevermuch the essential compassion of the Christian gospel may have been obscured by theological speculations, it is true that historic Christianity has always been associated with works of mercy and charity. These acts of kindness may have been indiscriminate, or unwise, or undertaken with the motive of acquiring merit for the giver. They have often been bestowed only upon the faithful, or used as a bait to entice into the fold the unwary or the unwilling. But, to some degree, they have served to identify Christianity with unselfish social service.

Because of their eager interest in the gospel accounts of the life of Jesus, liberals have discovered a fountain of fresh enthusiasm for the ministry of physical and moral healing. They often recall to us the quotation from Isaiah with which, according to one of the accounts, Jesus began his public work:—

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor:

He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,
And recovering of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty them that are bruised,
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.[1]

and they seek to carry on this ministry to-day. They call to their aid the resources of science. Recognizing the interdependence of mental and physical life and the vital importance of environment, they are concerned with the *whole* of every man's life. That he should be relieved from anything which interferes with his fullest possible development seems to them not secondary, not incidental, but a primary concern of religion. While the activities for social betterment are often undertaken by individuals and organizations not avowedly religious, liberal Protestants ascribe a truly Christian character to all such service and call upon Christian people intelligently and energetically to support measures for better health, better housing, sufficient recreation, fair wages and kindred items of social welfare.

We are coming to realize, as our fathers did not, that the spiritual life of men is conditioned by such materialistic items as the housing which they can secure, the number of hours which they sleep, the character of the tasks at which they must work, the presence or absence of means of recreation, the amount and quality of their food, the nature of the contract between the employer and the employed, and countless other situations which need investigation by social experts. (G. B. Smith, *Social Idealism and the New Theology*, p. 125.)

[1] St. Luke 4:18, 19.

All too slowly does the truth lay hold upon the Church that our very personalities themselves are social products, that we are born out of society and live in it and are molded by it, that without society we should not be human at all, and that the influences which play upon our lives, whether redeeming or degrading, are socially mediated. A man who says that he believes in the ineffable value of human personalities and who professes to desire their transformation and yet who has no desire to give them better homes, better cities, better family relationships, better health, better economic resources, better recreations, better books and better schools, is either an ignoramus who does not see what these things mean in the growth of souls, or else an unconscious hypocrite who does not really care so much about the souls of men as he says he does. (Fosdick, *Christianity and Progress,* p. 100.)

V. The Reconstruction of Society

In the gospel of Jesus liberals discover something far more fundamental and searching than suggestions for social reform, important as these are.[2] Chal-

[2] Ellwood holds that Christianity has always been directed at a revolution in culture: "The distinctive note of Christianity was 'redemption'—not simply of the individual but of the world. For it looked to the establishment of a social order in which the divine will should be realized—a kingdom of God—an order which should make of humanity one large family with peace, justice, and good will among all its members. But this new social order was to be established not by force or by authority, but by a new life within the individual soul—a life redeemed from sin and in harmony with the divine will. Christianity was thus not so much a mere 'reform' movement in the external social order as a movement directed at a 'revolution in culture,' a complete

lenged on the one hand by the all too apparent impossibility of permanent amelioration while underlying conditions remain unchanged, and on the other hand by the Christian vision of a just and loving society, some liberals are demanding in Jesus' name a radical transformation of the whole structure of our present civilization. Their utterances—many of them at any rate—ring with evangelistic fervor. With courage to condemn selfishness and aggression wherever they are found, they are calling upon the Christians of this generation to repent and to devote themselves to the creation of a society informed by the spirit of love. This, they declare, is the will of God, and in this task they believe that one experiences fellowship with God. They insist that salvation of the individual and salvation of society can not be separated, that they belong together and condition each other. Thus the three evangelical virtues of faith, hope and love take on new and deeper significance.

Of faith President McGiffert says:

> For democracy demands that we should believe not in great and good men merely, and not merely in the ordinary run of people, but in all people; that we shall have the confidence that they are able or will become able to govern themselves and to form a society where equal rights and opportunities and even-handed justice shall everywhere

change in the 'mores.' From the first it was so recognized and fought by the champions and defenders of the older order in which it originated." (Ellwood: *The Reconstruction of Religion*, p. 78.)

obtain. It is the biggest faith history has to show. If it be not a religious faith, there never was such a thing; and if it do not need all the religion a man can muster, religion never was needed for anything. (A. C. McGiffert, Democracy and Religion in *Religious Education*, June, 1919, p. 158.)

It is sometimes objected that ideals of social organization are outside the sphere of Christianity which should concern itself solely with the spiritual life of individuals. To this liberals reply:

Everywhere that the Christian minister turns, he finds his dearest ideals and hopes entangled in the economic life. Do you ask us then under these conditions to keep our hands off? In God's name, you ask too much! (Fosdick, *Christianity and Progress*, p. 115.)

There is, then, no standing-ground left for a narrowly individualistic Christianity. To talk of redeeming personality while one is careless of the social environments which ruin personality; to talk of building Christ-like character while one is complacent about an economic system that is definitely organized about the idea of selfish profit; to praise Christian ideals while one is blind to the inevitable urgency with which they insist on getting themselves expressed in social programs—all this is vanity. (Fosdick, *ibid.*, p. 123.)

Many writers proclaim the un-Christian character of our present society, and demand its transformation:

The concrete embodiment of Jesus' principle of love, of course, is Brotherhood. This is revolutionary. It implies the transformation of the unbrotherly organization of

society into new structures which shall embody the principle of universal love.

. . . . . .

In other words, our commercial, industrial, and political life remain largely unchristianized. They are almost as pagan as they were in Jesus' day. We have only played with the application of His principles to society, and have yet to discover how revolutionary His ideas are. (Samuel Dickey, *The Constructive Revolution of Jesus*, pp. 143, 147.)

Rauschenbusch may well be thought of as the great prophet of the new social order among liberal Protestants in America. He contrasts Christianity and Capitalism:

Christianity teaches the unity and solidarity of men; Capitalism reduces that teaching to a harmless expression of sentiment by splitting society into two antagonistic sections, unlike in their work, their income, their pleasures, and their point of view.

True Christianity wakens men to a sense of their worth, to love of freedom, and independence of action; Capitalism, based on the principle of autocracy, resists independence, suppresses the attempts of the working class to gain it, and deadens the awakening effect that goes out from Christianity.

. . . . . .

The most important advance in the knowledge of God that a modern man can make is to understand that the Father of Jesus Christ does not stand for the permanence of the capitalistic system.

The most searching intensification that a man can experience in his insight into sin and his consciousness of sin is to comprehend the sinfulness of our economic system and to realize his own responsibility for it.

The largest evangelistic and missionary task of the Church and of the individual Christian is to awaken the nation to a conviction of that sinfulness and to a desire for salvation from it. (Rauschenbusch, *Christianizing the Social Order*, pp. 321, 322.)

The following passage from a recent article in a religious magazine represents the same point of view:

Even before the recent orgy of war-profiteering revealed its heart-sickening proportions, it was only necessary to read the daily news columns to realize that, from the standpoint of any worthy moral ideal, our capitalistic society stood daily self-condemned, and that "business versus society" would not be a completely exaggerated view of the social process in some of its most important economic aspects. (Clarence Marsh Case, The Dilemma of Social Religion, in *The Journal of Religion*, May, 1922, p. 284.)

Professor Shailer Mathews discusses the relation of individual and social salvation and the patience and sacrifice which are needed.

The gospel must socialize the spirit of Calvary. Society cannot be saved as it is. It, like the individual, must partake of the death of Christ. Love can not fully express itself while our social order permits selfishness to succeed. Many an institution and practice must be ended. Obviously such a putting off of the social "flesh" will not be without cost. . . . One great mission of the Gospel is to educate men to let such loss come as sacrifice rather than as coerced surrender. Such an education cannot be accomplished over night. It presupposes slow growing social sympathy and wise counsels. But without it social progress will be by revolution rather than by that sacrificial unfolding of love which Jesus illustrated and to which he calls

men. If such socializing of the spiritual impulses shall come to compel an extensive reorganization of society, that is only what is to be expected if every knee is to bow to Jesus Christ and the will of God is to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Yet even the prospect of a new social order is not to blind the Christian community to its unspectacular mission to the spiritual life of the individual. There may be regenerate men without their being a thoroughly regenerate society; but a regenerate society cannot be composed of unregenerate men. . . . And it is the business of the church to see that such men are forthcoming; men of vision, of social sympathy, of consciences trained from childhood to see the moral obligations of corporations and labor unions, each ready to take up his cross and to teach society to take up its cross. Christians need to be taught the virility of such sacrificial life, for they are in danger of being feminized to the point of submission to a *laissez faire* optimism. Society needs to be taught to share in the adventure of a love which chooses the spiritual in preference to the merely economic. A vicarious tenth must replace the submerged tenth. (Shailer Mathews, *The Gospel and the Modern Man,* pp. 317 and ff.)

The goal and the process cannot be separated. Social reconstruction which has as its aim the establishment of a Christian democracy must employ methods consistent with its aim.

It must be clearly understood that the two fundamental demands of Christianity for reconstruction are absolutely interdependent. The spirit and the end of society belong together. Its organizing principle and its goal must harmonize. If society seeks possession, then it must have force to protect the possessor. If it seeks power, it must

have armies as the tool of the aggressor. Autocracy must build its state around militarism and plutocracy must organize industry around its hired and armed guards to suppress the protesting or revolting workers. The natures of the militaristic state and of capitalistic industrialism are identical. They seek special power and privilege for the few, and that necessarily means the control of the many by the few. Mars and Mammon belong together. If we would overthrow one, the other also must be destroyed, for they are inseparably joined. Both of them are the relentless, uncompromising foes of Christianity and of democracy. (Harry F. Ward, *The Christian Demand for Social Reconstruction,* p. 49.)

Sherwood Eddy, one of the leading missionary evangelists of this generation, recognizes the urgency of the same demand.

The Church cannot forfeit its right of moral judgment in economic questions.

On the issue of war, as a generation ago on the issue of slavery, on the moral issues of our industrial, social and political life, the church is at the parting of the ways. Will it take up its cross and follow its Master in a self-sacrificing life of redemptive love, or follow the discredited method of the autocracies of the old world in fighting for the *status quo,* without vision and without passion for social justice? (Sherwood Eddy, The Church at the Cross Roads, in the *Christian Century,* Dec. 29, 1921, p. 13.)[2]

[2] See also an article by the same author, Putting Christianity into Industry, in *The Christian Century,* March 9, 1922, p. 298; and an article by Paul Jones in the issue for March 16, 1922, *Can the Church Function with a Social Gospel,* in which he urges Christians to make a thorough study of the principles of social and industrial relationships as the field in which the gospel is most needed today.

This requires of liberals the colossal purpose of transforming our present social order—characterized by conflict, greed, and oppression—into something fundamentally different. This obviously would necessitate a fundamental re-direction of religious education.

The modern church is concerned with life, with the life of our society. She prays for a new social order every time she utters the Lord's Prayer. She prays for a new reign to begin, the reign or social organization of a Father. She seeks that humanity may be turned from its present order of the jungle, from the wolf-band ways to the ways of a family. She preaches, if she preaches the good news, the possibility of men practicing good-will, of a society which is so utterly unlike ours that it holds that a man's life does not "consist in the abundance of things he possesses." What could be more revolutionary? What could more definitely cut under the very foundations of our form of social living? (Cope: *Organizing the Church School,* pp. 15, 16.)

"Social reconstruction" may be so interpreted as to include the entire purpose of religion. For the sake, however, of defining objectives with greater clearness, it is important to consider the various implications of such a purpose as they relate to other issues significant for religious education.

VI. The Political State

Liberal Protestants have no common political platform. They are found in all the various parties in the United States. They are alike, however,—many of

them at least—in possessing certain general attitudes towards the political state, attitudes which are characteristically revealed in the following positions.

1. In general, they affirm the desirability and the possibility of operating the political unit, whether large or small, upon the humanitarian principles of Jesus—with (a) the absence of economic strife, (b) no race or class privilege, (c) participation in government of all those not physically or mentally incompetent, and (d) the ruling motive of aggression replaced by that of mutual service.

These characteristics of the ideal state are illustrated by quotations under other topics treated in this chapter.

2. Many liberals recognize the value to the government of constructive criticism, and they maintain that such criticism, from a Christian standpoint, is one of the essential functions of the church.

> There is hardly anything more needed now in the international situation than a multitude of people who will sit in radical judgment on the actions of their governments, so that when the governments of the world begin to talk war they will know that surely they must face a mass of people rising up to say: War? Why war? We are no longer dumb beasts to be led to slaughter; we no longer think that any state on earth is God Almighty. (Fosdick, *Christianity and Progress,* p. 186.)

The church in America has a unique mission to perform. No other agency—certainly not the state-administered school system—has such an opportunity

to educate the youth of the country in ethical discrimination on political issues.

There is at least one necessary objective in the training of citizens that the state schools are certainly not in a position to pursue vigorously. I mean the development of free judgment upon the state itself.

. . . Therefore, to the question, What specific contribution to training for citizenship have we a right to expect from religious education? the answer is: This above all—Habituating the young to judge all social relations, processes, and institutions, the state included, from the standpoint of the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Coe, Religious Education and Political Conscience, in *Religious Education,* Dec., 1922, pp. 431, 435.)

3. Considerable impatience exists with the limitations imposed upon good will by the policies of a narrow nationalism.

The curse of nationalism is that, having pooled the unselfishness of persons in one group under one national name and of persons in another group under another national name, it uses this beautiful unselfishness of patriotism to carry out national enterprises that are fundamentally selfish. One element, therefore, is indispensable in any solution: enough Christians, whether they call themselves by that name or not, who have caught Jesus' point of view that only one loyalty on earth is absolute—the will of God for all mankind. (Fosdick, *Christianity and Progress,* pp. 184, 185.)

We are surely approaching a time when patriotism is not to be interpreted as implying a persistent attitude of suspicion, distrust, and hatred toward other nations. (King, *The Moral and Religious Challenge of Our Time,* p. 173.)

As Christians we cannot admit the nationalist's contention that the nation is the final unit, and that no humanitarian considerations should be allowed to stand in the way of national interest. (Brown, *Is Christianity Practicable?* p. 158.)

He [the Modernist] is convinced that the evangelization of the world must be preceded by the casting down of the idol of nationalism, in order that the ideal of brotherhood may dominate. (Leighton Parks, *What Is Modernism?* p. 143.)

There are indeed in current nationalism certain tendencies which Christianity cannot promote or countenance. Foremost among these is the spirit of national conceit. (Faunce, *The New Horizon of State and Church,* p. 64.)

4. Liberals are concerned that democracy in this country should be truly representative. Their activities for social welfare contribute to this end. They desire in particular that women shall have a larger function in the direction of the processes of government. One of the resolutions adopted at the Cleveland Convention of the Federal Council of Churches contains the following clause:

We recognize that women played no small part in the winning of the war. We believe that they should have full political and economic equality with equal pay for equal work, and a maximum eight hour day. (Quoted by Coe Hayne, in *For a New America,* p. 144.)

Some liberals are also questioning whether children cannot take a recognized and constructive part in democratic social organization. Professor Coe says:

The experience of a legal status, defined in the child's own mind, and involving both rights that he can have enforced and duties that cannot be evaded—this essential experience of democratic discipline is nowhere provided. (George A. Coe, The Nature of Discipline for a Democracy, in *Religious Education,* June, 1919, p. 140.)

and he suggests that "the grant of full franchise as a citizen of the state and of the United States should be conditioned upon success" in a graded experience and practice of democracy which should include even for young children the making and enforcing of laws.[4]

5. The newer books on home missions discuss the practical implications of making America Christian in terms not only of individual piety but of community-wide and nation-wide movements for social reform:

The whole task is to make the United States, as a nation, and the people, as individuals, Christians. (Coe Hayne, *For a New America,* p. xvi.)

We shall at least have made a good beginning in building a better America when we have stopped unnecessary disease; supplied good schools for all our children; provided thoroughgoing religious training for them; made wise and adequate provision for the use of constantly increasing leisure time; developed a sense of social responsibility which finds its clearest interpretation in terms of Christian stewardship; substituted justice, tolerance and broad sympathies for injustice, intolerance and prejudice; and

[4] For further discussion on this point see the entire article to which reference has been made and another article by Professor Coe, The Functions of Children in the Community, *Religious Education,* Vol. xii (1918), pp. 26-32.

created a true sense of world fellowship with all peoples under the sun. These are some things to start with, at least. (Jay Stowell, *The Child and America's Future*, pp. 171-2.)

VII. International and Inter-Racial Problems

Nowhere is the change of emphasis characteristic of Protestant liberals in America more obvious than in their attitude toward other races and nations.

1. The purposes of the great missionary enterprises are being transformed.

a. Liberal Christian missionaries no longer seek utterly to discredit and destroy non-Christian faiths.

> Moreover the application of the scientific spirit to the study of the non-Christian religions of to-day is leading to a new valuation of these. . . . At any rate, it is no longer respectable among scholars to seek to show the utter depravity of pagan nations as a step in the process of proving the perfection of Christianity. (G. B. Smith, *Social Idealism and the Changing Theology*, p. 96.)

> Our concern should be not to break down and destroy, not to displace other faiths by the Christian faith and other civilizations by our Western civilization, but to build up in coöperation with those of other faiths and other civilizations a better world, more genuinely religious and more completely civilized than anything we yet know. (A. C. McGiffert, The Church and World Fellowship, in *Religious Education* for June, 1921, p. 133.)

b. They seek, on the other hand, to appreciate the contributions of the cultures of other countries, and

to replace the spirit of benevolent philanthropy with a spirit of reciprocity—of mutual give and take.

If we are ever to work with India for a better world, there must be a development of mutual appreciation and respect. Pity and compassion may go forth to those whom we do not respect, but if we are to enter into Christian coöperation with another people, there must be admiration for what is worthy in them. We must think of them not only as recipients of help, but as contributors of a rich store of customs and habits all their own. (Daniel J. Fleming, *Building with India*, p. 27.)

c. Movements for social reform and for social reconstruction are beginning to be recognized as a legitimate part of the missionary program.

In his recent book on Japan, Mr. Galen Fisher emphasizes the importance of Christian social service:

Many other examples of the leadership of Christians in social enterprises could be given. To a practical people like the Japanese, who judge a religion chiefly by its fruits, these enterprises are more convincing than volumes of apologetics. . . . For generations the common people have associated religion with the shaven-headed Buddhist priests, who drone Sanskrit liturgies and officiate at funerals, while they give the multitudes sweating under the yoke of life exhortations on the unreality of evil and the compensations of a paradise hereafter. A learned comparison between Buddhism and Christianity is beyond their grasp, but a religion that incarnates itself in self-sacrificing service and that stoops in the spirit of Christ unto the very least of the drudges in mines and factories, and the unfortunates in the slums, will command their respect. (Galen Fisher, *Creative Forces in Japan*, p. 100.)

The Peking social survey is well known. It has contributed to the interest in social questions taken by Chinese Christians. At the meeting of the National Christian Council at Shanghai in 1922, a strong plea was made for resisting, in the name of Jesus, the injustices of a rapidly growing industrialism.

> What is the Church doing to help the industrial workers adjust themselves to the tremendous change that the modern industrial system brings?
>
> Must the tragic and humiliating history of the West be repeated here? (Agatha Harrison, in *Report of the National Christian Conference,* Shanghai, China, May, 1922, p. 463.)

Mr. Paul Hutchinson, doubtless representative of a number of missionaries of the younger generation, demands that the missionary forces of the churches should consciously recognize as their supreme task the creation of a new society, international in scope and Christian in spirit. In an article in the *Atlantic Monthly,* he says in part:

> This is the sort of international sin that most grievously besets the future—political injustice, economic exploitation, racial discrimination, material standards of success. Christian missions, if they mean to make the world truly Christian, must deal with this. To deal with these sins will require an entire change of missionary method. . . .
>
> This readjustment to a new campaign is not a minor matter. For either the churches of the West will make the readjustment, and find themselves once more engaged upon an adventure of vigor and significance, or their bid for a place among the world's moulding forces will end in a

formal sterility. (Paul Hutchinson, Christian Missions, in the *Atlantic Monthly*, Sept., 1923, p. 389.)

d. It is agreed that foreign direction of missionary affairs should be withdrawn as speedily as possible and that the nationals of the various "mission fields" should be expected to assume increasingly the control of the Christian organizations in their communities.

A secretary of one of the leading mission boards writes:

> It becomes ever more evident that the Christian Church is the fundamental institution in the missionary enterprise, and that the establishment of a real Church with its own life and government, unsubsidized and undirected, but standing on its own feet and coöperating with us or making a place for us to coöperate with it, should be the normative principle of missionary policy. (Robert E. Speer, *The Gospel and the New World*, p. 285.)

From China comes this message:

> I would humbly suggest that in so far as the Chinese church exists, the organized missions of Western churches in this country have no ecclesiastical status whatever, except by the courtesy of that Church; and I think that the time has come, or is soon coming, when it must be clearly recognized that, in so far as the churches of Europe and America continue operations here in China, it ought to be only by the consent, and at the invitation of, the Chinese Church. (R. K. Evans, The Church of Christ in China, in *Report of the National Christian Conference*, Shanghai, May, 1922, p. 229.)

The same point of view is expressed by a missionary in India:

In the last resort this transfer of control involves to that extent the voice of Indians in the appointment and even more in the removal of foreign missionaries. . . . For there is no victory in our work to be compared to the native church that can stand up to us and look us in the face and make terms with us as sovereign in her own house. (Frank Lenwood, The Effect of Modern Development on Mission Policy, in the *International Review of Missions,* October, 1923, pp. 524, 525.)

2. While liberal writers do not identify themselves to any great extent with theoretical pacifism, recent writings of some representative liberals reveal a passionate determination to abolish war as a means of settling disputes between nations.

We want a change of mental attitude toward this whole matter of peace and war so fundamental and revolutionary as to require a complete reconstruction of the principles upon which the relations between nations have hitherto rested. (Brown, *Is Christianity Practicable?* p. 99.)

The most amazing thing in modern ethical discussion is that intelligent men are still found who honestly believe that among nations the brute's way of settling a quarrel is the only way and that the law of the jungle is the most fundamental law of international life. (Faunce, *The New Horizon in Church and State,* p. 65.)

To-day we must make unmistakably clear our position against war, against competitive preparation for war, against reliance on war. We must make clear our certain conviction that, save for our corporate senselessness, war in the modern world is as needless as it is suicidal, that only the folly and selfishness of diplomats and the stupid willingness of the people to be led like beasts to the

shambles, make it seem necessary. Against foolish chauvinism, competitive armaments, secret diplomacy, imperialistic experiments, against endeavors to play lone hands when, by coöperation, international agencies could be set up to solve the problems which war never solves but only makes the worse, we must now lift our protest and launch our crusade. (Fosdick, in his Introduction to *War,* by Kirby Page, p. xx.)

The last war may have been the lesser of two evils; the next war will be suicide. If we believe this, let us begin at once to educate statesmen, newspapers, and the clergy. The next war must be boycotted by the Church of Christ. (William Austin Smith, *War and the Churches,* pamphlet, p. 14.)

3. They believe that the religion of Jesus calls for an expression in international organization of a world-wide loyalty.

But to make the economic organization a means for the increase of fraternity requires that it be shaped around certain concepts and ideals. It requires the general recognition of the equality of need and right of all mankind, and the universal acceptance of the obligation of service. It demands adherence to the truth, "above all nations is humanity," and the development of supreme loyalty to the worldwide human family above all loyalties to class or nation or race. (Ward, *The New Social Order,* p. 381.)

The Church has something to say about this conflict of patriotisms. It has a loyalty to offer which makes place for all the lesser loyalties of race and class and nation. It opens a horizon which carries us beyond the confines of our country and requires us to envisage the world as a whole. (W. A. Brown, *The Church in America,* p. 45)

The Christian statesman who moves for humanization of international relationships may be advancing into new territory, but he may well remember that his religion has from the beginning called for just such statesmanship. (Francis J. McConnell, *Democratic Christianity*, p. 59)

4. A growing number of Protestant liberals are opposed to discrimination in the United States on the ground of race, color, or religion; and they oppose as un-Christian factional organizations which stir up suspicion and prejudice. The following sentences are from an article on the Ku Klux Klan which appeared recently in one of the leading church papers:

The fact must be borne in mind that our lives, in America, have become so firmly intermeshed, that a real, permanent hatred on the part of one group toward another would be very difficult to sustain. We all live by faith in one another, here. . . . This is the sort of faith that is threaded through our whole American life. *We must not let that faith break down!* It is no mere adornment! It is the only guarantee we have of the perpetuity of our nation! It is just that serious! Well; how are we to have faith in one another without mutual confidence and trust? And does mutual trust thrive on hate?

Preachers are asking one another, these days, "What are you doing about it?" Many are maintaining a dignified silence because they know there are klansmen in the congregation. They do not care to become embroiled in a racket. It is quite fortunate for us that Jesus Christ was not so sensitive to the discomforts of a racket.

The question for us to decide is not: What will it do to me, personally, if I do my bit toward discrediting this thing? The question is: Am I for, or against, a program

of organized hate? If I am against it, and keep silence for policy's sake, may God have mercy on my soul! (Lloyd C. Douglas, The Patriotism of Hatred, in the *Christian Century*, Oct. 25, 1923, pp. 1373-1374.)

VIII. Human Nature

Psychological investigations of the make-up of human nature are vitally important for the Christian religion, with its characteristic concern for the transformation of ordinary human beings into citizens of a heavenly kingdom. In general, however, liberal Protestants seem to be less alive than one should expect to scientific researches in this field. Recognition of their importance is confined, for the most part, to liberals who are writing definitely on problems of religious education or the psychology of religion.

The discoveries which they mention include: (1) the inherently social character of personality; (2) the extent and the limits of the educability of human nature—educability, that is, in the sense that human nature is modified by experience; (3) the importance of individual differences—their nature, extent, and significance for learning; (4) the effect of age and growth upon ability and interests.[5] All these must be considered in formulating objectives for religious education which are adapted to the needs of children

[5] While it is not within the province of this report to quote from writers outside the field of Protestant religious education, it should be recognized that the conclusions referred to here rest in considerable measure upon the researches of such men as Baldwin, Cooley, Thorndike, MacDougall, etc.

and youth. They suggest the importance of phrasing general objectives not in static terms but in terms of social progress or growth. They also suggest the desirability of proposing subsidiary aims related to more general aims but adapted to the needs of special individuals and groups, and to special circumstances.

The following quotations illustrate these four points:

1. On the social character of personality.[6]

> We now think of human nature in terms of the relations of persons to one another and of their behavior within these relations, including not only what they do with their hands, and feet, but what they do with their minds. We are interested not merely in the fact that groups exist, but in the way the minds of the members of groups interpenetrate and in the way the groups under consideration are related to one another and to other groups.
>
> Human nature, then, is what human nature does—under certain conditions, namely, when it is in socially functioning relations. (Hugh Hartshorne, What is Human Nature, in *Religious Education,* Feb., 1923, p. 17.)

and

> Society is able to have this enormous influence upon the individual because it not only instructs him but to some extent genuinely constitutes him. . . . In short each one of us is what he is in virtue of his relations to his fellows. His place in the social network is a genuine part

[6] This is the psychological justification for the insistence of liberalism that personal salvation is possible only in a redeemed society—that the individual and social aspects of all life are bound together.

of him. (James B. Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness*, pp. 76, 77.)

2. On the educability of human nature—

In the first place, modern sociological research has shown almost beyond the shadow of a doubt the plasticity or modifiability of human nature in social life. Much of the incubus of doubt which has rested upon the program of ethical religion in the past has been due to the supposition that human nature was unmodifiable; but *the studies among all the peoples of the world of anthropologists and sociologists show human nature to be one of the most modifiable things we know.* We are almost justified in drawing the conclusion that it may be indefinitely modified by social traditions, social institutions, and the social environment. (Charles A. Ellwood, *Christianity and Social Science,* p. 13)

and

Original equipment provides for changing itself in the direction indicated by satisfactions that come from the operation of this equipment in a human environment. . . . Original nature thus provides for its own development, for its own evolution. (Hugh Hartshorne, *Childhood and Character,* p. 155)

3. On individual differences—

To sum up then. Find out all you can about each child's parents, grandparents, size of family, home-life, neighborhood influences, previous physical conditions, any peculiarities, in order that you may know better why he acts as he does, and make allowances for him accordingly. It is absolutely false that all are born equal either physically, mentally or socially; and we must take into account

just what capital a child has to start out with. Of him who has little, less may be expected; to whom much is given, of him more must be required. (Mary T. Whitley, *A Study of the Little Child,* p. 21)

4. On the effect of age and growth on ability and interests—

Personality grows naturally. You cannot build it within a pupil by mechanically cementing ideas one upon the other, as though they were bricks. The youngest child in your class already has a personality of his own—living, growing, maturing. And, like every other living thing, it has its laws of life and growth and development. Just as the body develops in accordance with the laws of its nature, so the mind develops from the blank of babyhood to the self-reliant personality of complete manhood in accordance with definite laws which by nature belong to it. If you are going to help a child become the right sort of a person, you must understand these laws, just as truly as the gardener must understand and use the natural laws of plant development. (Luther A. Weigle, *The Pupil,* p. 6)

Moreover, as the child grows in years, new possibilities of action appear through the ripening of new capacities. The adolescent's actions, *e.g.,* are capable of very great enlargement through the ripening of the sex function and the tremendous growth in body and nerve structure that go along with it. (Joseph M. Artman, Expressional Activities in the Light of Current Psychology, in *Religious Education,* Feb., 1918, p. 13.)

IX. The Educational Process

Liberalism in religion is allying itself with progressive movements in education. Both are products

of this age, and it is impossible to overlook their congeniality of spirit. For the purpose of this study it is not necessary to make a survey of modern educational theory. It will be sufficient simply to state the points of emphasis of certain outstanding Protestant liberals—representative of important groups—when they refer to such issues in the theory of the educational process as have a bearing upon aims for religious education.

1. Liberals emphasize the influence of environment on learning. To a varying degree, "environment" is understood to include imaginative elements present, the persons in the group, and the total "set" of the learner, as well as the material surroundings.

> The whole philosophy of modern education is based upon the principle that to bring about an inner change in the individual you must change his environment. (Kierstead, The Leadership of the Ministry, in *The Journal of Religion,* January, 1922, p. 50.)

> *Environment* provides the stimuli which free the capacities into expression. . . .
>
> As stimulus for reaction environment is not to be thought of merely as an object or thing. Nearly all objects or things with which one comes in contact are colored or evaluated by the way other folks act toward or with these material things. Thus, the stimuli for the growing child or youth are more often social ways of doing which are organized around the physical objects. . . .
>
> Education enters only when society scientifically manipulates environment as a stimulus. (Joseph A. Artman, Expressional Activities in the Light of Current Psychology, in *Religious Education,* Feb., 1918, pp. 10, 12.)

The aims of religious education must then include provision for a controlled social environment.

2. The primary importance of focussing attention on present rather than future experience is recognized.

The whole trend of modern educational theory is to emphasize the child's characteristics and abilities, to adapt the school to his present needs, rather than to try to fit him to a hard-and-fast, traditional curriculum based on certain things that we believe he will need to know later as an adult. We say nowadays that education means, not filling a child's mind with supposedly necessary external material, but developing the child in every way, physically, mentally, morally and socially, for fuller *present* life, because we believe that out of present development will come enrichment of life in the future. (John H. Finley, *The Debt Eternal,* pp. 168, 169)

Again, the scientific study of religion is making clear the experimental basis of our faith in God. We see that the arguments we give to justify our belief are arguments after the fact. We must find God in our experience before we can reason about him. (Brown, *The Church in America,* p. 147)

Of neglecting to give attention to factors actually existing in the present social experience of young children, Professor Coe says:

But let us not deceive ourselves. While we thus sleep the enemy sows tares. From infancy the pupil is in contact with the social order as it is; through this contact he is forming habits, and not only habits, but also the presuppositions of his thinking with respect to men and so-

ciety. . . . Shall we forever go on making the foolish assumption that the will of the child remains neutral for years and years with regard to the contest between justice and injustice? Shall we go on postponing in education what is not and cannot be postponed in the child's social experience? (George A. Coe, *A Social Theory of Religious Education,* pp. 60, 61)

The aims of religious education must then concern themselves with issues alive in the present social environment of children.

3. Insistence on pupil activity has become a commonplace in the educational methods advocated by all forward-looking Protestant leaders. The important point to note in this regard is that interest in such educational devices as meaningless games and "busy work" is giving place to the promotion of enterprises of genuine worth, socially conducted, and evaluated by ethical standards.

Here is the central principle upon which the educational work of the church is based: persons learn by doing; they learn social living by actively sharing in the life of social groups; they can learn the social life of Christian love only by sharing the life of a society that loves and by finding in it the opportunity actively to share in loving. (H. F. Cope, *Organizing the Church School,* p. 32)

Our chief work as teachers of religion is to develop wholesome religious activity. . . .

Whatever phases of religious life we emphasize in class, it is essential to remember that the universal method of learning is in and through activity, both physical and mental, and that the younger the pupils are the more closely must learning be associated with muscular activity

at the moment of learning. (Hugh Hartshorne, *Childhood and Character,* p. 160)

Sound method in moral education, then, will cause children to face, directly and analytically, their relations to one another, to their teachers, and to the larger society. It will not build up a structure of moral ideas apart from moral action, nor will it be content, on the other hand, with conduct, however appropriate, that does not grow into reflective self-control and weighing of standards. Just as the best teaching of arithmetic, or of manual processes, or of physics causes the child to realize what he is doing, why he does it, what the results are, and how it can be improved, so in morals it is open-eyed, forward-looking, and in this case self-conscious practice that counts most for the formation of a democratic character. (George A. Coe, *A Social Theory of Religious Education,* p. 194)

Everyone is most interested in that in which he has an active part. The meeting in which we presided or made a speech or presented a report is to us a more interesting meeting than one in which we were a silent auditor. To the child, personal response is even more necessary. No small part of the reason why the child "learns by doing" is that he is interested in doing as he is not interested in mere listening. (George H. Betts, *How to Teach Religion,* pp. 153-4)

Other attempts to vitalize the schools are in methods of teaching. The underlying principle of them is that the child's interest must be secured, that he learns best what and when he wants to learn, and that he learns best by active participation, rather than by passive absorption. The methods run all the way from the use of plays and games to awake interest to the "project method" which sets forth a definite task or problem, in the choice of which

the children have a part, and which they work out themselves under guidance and supervision. (J. H. Finley, *The Debt Eternal,* pp. 172-3)

The aims of religious education must then provide for social activities on a Christian level and for reflection upon these activities.

4. The school of religion, like the secular school, must be integrally related to the larger life of the society of which the school is a part. Experience within the school, to be adequately educative, must be continuous with life outside.

We must make the life of the class one with the life of the community, establish areas of coöperation, make this our chief work, building our instruction upon the pupils' immediate experience of social problems. (Hugh Hartshorne, *Childhood and Character,* p. 165)

It now becomes evident that if the basal process in education is social interaction, the ancient isolation of school experience from other experience must be overcome all along the line. (George A. Coe, *A Social Theory of Religious Education,* p. 21.)

We have passed from the pigeon-hole school. We have the much larger task of organizing class work extending into the week, group activities, worship and play, all integrated into the total, normal week-around experiences of children. Instead of scheming a Sunday-single-session school, we now seek to organize programs of religious education. (Cope, *Organizing the Church School,* p. 25.)

The aims of religious education must then provide for continuity of social experience.

5. The attitude of research is emphasized—the patient searching for facts and the habit of forming an opinion only after sufficient evidence is secured.

This is our most serious need. We have made many mistakes by divided counsels, but we have made more mistakes by attempts to work in ignorance of the facts. (H. F. Cope, *Principles of Christian Service,* p. 99)

When religious education acquires the purpose of taking a definite part in the evolution of society as a whole, and when, in order to fulfill this purpose, we undertake to lift the teaching of religion from the plane of traditional routine to that of a scientifically controlled process, we obligate ourselves to cosmopolitanism of intellect as well as of heart. To make it effective, we must go on to assume the university attitude of freedom, of scientific method, of eagerness for new knowledge and for the widest organization of knowledge. (Coe, *Social Theory of Religious Education,* p. 290)

The aims of religious education must then emphasize the value of research and must themselves depend upon a scientific study of facts.

X. The Church

The outstanding requirements of liberal religion upon the social institution which expresses its life have been set forth in the preceding sections. The church is to be a fellowship of persons committed to the general Christian purpose rather than to a formula of beliefs. The liberal expects that through experience and instruction this Christian attitude will develop into the insights and purposes already de-

scribed with respect to the Bible, theology, Jesus, social welfare, the reconstruction of society, the political state, international and inter-racial problems, human nature, and education. A comprehensive statement of the church's responsibility along all these lines could hardly be expected from a single source; when liberal writers emphasize certain issues, they quite naturally maintain that there—within the areas of those particular issues—lies the supreme duty of the church.

Mention should be made, however, of certain characteristic attitudes toward the church found more or less generally in the writings of Protestant liberals.

1. The church is criticized. Liberals, themselves church members, seek to evaluate the institution on a Christian basis. Many of them are surprisingly outspoken in their confession of defects. "The Modernist is convinced," says Dr. Parks, that "unless the Church can be revivified by a blood infusion, it will die of pernicious anemia." (*What is Liberalism?* p. 144.)

Lyman Abbott contrasts different standards and practices within the church.

> It is true that the prosperity and progress of the Church has been its peril. While it has been pushing its influence out into the world, the world has been pushing its influence into the Church. Deeds of avarice and cruelty have been strangely interwoven in the fabric of its history with deeds of unselfish devotion and self-sacrificing love. It has been both narrow-minded and large-hearted; both divided into petty sects quarreling over forms of words and united in worldwide service by love for its Master. When-

ever it has lost that love; whenever it has substituted an admiration of beauty for a reverence of goodness, emotional enjoyment for self-denying service, regulation of conduct for inspiration of the spirit, belief in a creed for faith in a Person, whatever its wealth, its political power, its prestige, whatever the beauty of its services, the regularity of its order, or the soundness of its theology, it has ceased to be a living church, and has had pronounced against it the condemnation uttered nineteen centuries ago against its prototype: "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." (Lyman Abbott: *What Christianity Means to Me,* p. 45)

According to another writer, the church of the present day is, to some extent at least, stifling the spirit of free inquiry.

Here we touch on what is perhaps the Church's greatest sin—the sin of encouraging the closed mind instead of urging open-mindedness and the critical spirit. Men have been asked to believe thus and so simply because such was the inherited teaching of the Church. This is putting shackles on the mind. In so far as the Church has encouraged people to give their assent, without searching inquiry, to doctrines whose truth is sincerely questioned by any considerable number of intelligent men, she has done a grave disservice to our democracy. But not only has she taught questionable opinions as certain, she has attempted to inoculate her members with such an assurance in regard to them that they shall be immune to opposing arguments. By emotional influences she has stifled the murmurings of the intellect. The result is that the whole course of modern thought has been confused,

and few, if any, modern philosophers have attained to the intellectual clarity of the Greeks. The fact that a man belongs to a church is widely taken to show that he has an uncritical mind. (Durant Drake: *Shall We Stand By the Church?* p. 12)

2. Liberals welcome, and indeed seek to promote, fellowship among denominational groups. They stress the inclusive character of Christian fellowship. They rebel against barriers erected in the interests of ecclesiastical orthodoxy. A few references will illustrate this tendency:

What is going on in industry, in politics, and in education is going on also in the Church. In many different ways the different Christian bodies, dissatisfied with their present divisions, are working out forms appropriate to democratic religion. In the local community, in the missionary and educational work of the Churches, between the different denominations as a whole, various forms of union are being devised. Community Churches are being formed, Federations of Churches are being set up, nationwide Federal Councils are being established. Plans are being made for extensive coöperation in the field of religious education. What the end is to be, we cannot yet foresee. But we shall fail to read the signs of the times if we do not perceive that in these new experiments the democratic Church of the future is feeling its way to a more complete and adequate self-expression. (William Adams Brown: *Imperialistic Religion and the Religion of Democracy,* pp. 176, 177.)

When a class like organized labor seems to think that the Church does not in any sense belong to it, the Church should give itself no rest in the search for a message or

a policy that shall make unmistakably clear that the Church belongs to all men. (F. J. McConnell: *Democratic Christianity*, p. 21)

Ecclesiasticism is defined by the Century Dictionary as "devotion to the interests of the Church and extension of its influence in its external relations." I did not find in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ any devotion to the interests of the Church. (Lyman Abbott: *What Christianity Means to Me*, p. 18.)

We have outlived the day of individualism and also that of orthodoxy. I believe few of us realize how completely the old orthodoxy fails to appeal to the modern Christian. (Foakes Jackson: *Some Different Aspects of the Church*, p. 25)

3. It is essential to the liberal position that the Church should be thought of as progressive, as looking to the future, as experimental and creative.

To quote two of the writers already mentioned:

The members of this developing church will never regard their work as finished. They will always be trying new experiments. They will be continually comparing experiences in the hope of finding some better way. Conscious of serving the living God, their faces will be turned to the future; they will set no limits to their expectation. (William Adams Brown: *Imperialistic Religion and the Religion of Democracy*, p. 178)

What a travesty it is to speak of the Church as a brake-system on the fast-moving life of our time! Brakes we no doubt need, but the Church of God is not to be forever pictured as stopping things or as holding them back. The Church enthrones and worships a Creator. How better

to worship a Creator than by showing a creative spirit. (F. J. McConnell: *Democratic Christianity*, p. 35)

The aspects of the liberal movement noted in this chapter—involving as they do standards of method, items of knowledge, and individual and social attitudes—carry with them numerous educational objectives. While these objectives have been implied in the foregoing analysis, it remains necessary to state them in such a way that they may serve as standards for the religious education of children and youth in the issues here mentioned. They are not special or final ends but directions of effort that we may expect to find running through all educational activities characteristic of liberal Christianity. These objectives include:

1. Knowledge of the facts of our present civilization —accurate information on living conditions, on social institutions including the church and the state, and on the make-up of human nature.

2. The desire and the ability to relieve suffering and to work toward the reform of un-Christian social conditions.

3. An evaluation, on a Christian basis, of the institutions with which the groups under instruction come into contact, and active efforts for whatever reconstructions are found to be needed.

4. Mutual appreciation and coöperation between groups where there are racial, occupational, national or other differences; and the attempt to destroy "special privilege" due to age, sex, race, wealth, etc.

5. Activity in abolishing war as a means of set-

tling disputes, and participation in efforts for reconciliation between individuals, classes, and nations.

6. Active faith in humanity and in the gradual transformation of society into what is commonly called "the kingdom of God". This is always taken to mean a brotherly society and usually involves the acceptance of a democratic ideal and experiments in democratic organization.

7. Efforts to develop the Christian church as an effective agency for the reconstruction of society.

CHAPTER IV

Objectives as Defined by Leading Writers in Religious Education

To what extent do the objectives as defined by writers in religious education express the positions of liberal Christianity? It is fair to suppose that practice in religious education will be largely influenced by the aims advocated by leading writers on the subject, and it is therefore important to ask how far their aims indicate agreement with the liberal positions already outlined and a tendency to present the reconstructive purposes inherent in the liberal movement. Among the leaders who have written extensively in recent years, six representative men have been chosen.

Dr. Weigle, professor in Yale Divinity School, emphasizes the point that religious education means more than imparting information and more than mere "training."

> As a teacher you aim, then, to *develop a personality.* You want your pupil not simply to know, but to live Christianity. You want him not merely to do right deeds, but to do them of his own will. There is but one test of a teacher's work. It is not *"What have you taught your pupil to know?"* or *"What have you trained him to do?"* but *"What sort of a person have you helped him to become?"* (Weigle, *The Pupil,* p. 5)

In a later book on worship he says:

> The goal at which we aim in training children to worship is that we may help them to become men and women (1) of sound individual habits of devotion, (2) members of the Christian Church and regular participators in its worship, (3) who have committed their lives to God through Jesus Christ and have experienced his redeeming, regenerating grace, (4) whose worship issues in lives of Christlike service, doing God's work in the world, (5) and who have begun so to know God through worship as to have entered, here and now, upon eternal life. (Weigle, *Training the Devotional Life,* p. 90)

This aim is stated in general terms and lacks specific direction. As stated, without further interpretation, it suggests individual goodness through such means as doctrinal conformity, habits of worship, and the practice of social service. Dr. Weigle does not go on to explain *how* lives committed to God should be changed, nor what God's work in the world actually involves.

Professor Athearn of Boston University makes a strong plea for a religious education which shall provide a continuity of social experience. He says:

> The task of religious education is to motivate conduct in terms of a religious ideal of life. The facts and the experiences of life must be interfused with religious meaning. In a democracy the common facts, attitudes and ideals given as a basis of common action must be surcharged with religious interpretation. Spiritual significance and God-consciousness must attach to the entire content of the secular curriculum. Unless the curriculum of the Church

school can pick up the curriculum of the public school and shoot it full of religious meaning, the Church cannot guarantee that the conduct of the citizens of the future will be religiously motivated. (Walter Athearn, *A National System of Religious Education*, p. 30)

He emphasizes the importance of the standards of Jesus and declares for a world brotherhood.

The purpose of religious education is to indoctrinate the minds of all men with the standards, ideals and personal experiences of Jesus Christ in the interests of a permanent brotherhood of man. (*Ibid.*, p. 25.)

The characteristic notes of a world brotherhood are not indicated in Professor Athearn's writings; nor are the standards and ideals of Jesus as they bear on questions of the day. He gives us no hints as to our objectives in teaching children about the church, the political state, traditional theology. His statement that "in some place"—presumably the church school—"the Bible must be taught as religion as well as literature and history" is not supplemented by any elucidation of what he means by the Bible as religion.

In two recent books on religious education, *Professor Betts* of Northwestern University goes into more detail in discussing objectives. In his definition of aim he emphasizes especially the possibility of a normal continuous growth in religious experience.

On the positive side, religious education takes the child, endowed through his original nature as he is with capacities both for evil and good, and seeks to stimulate the good and suppress the bad, using for this purpose religious

instruction, nurture, and guidance. (G. H. Betts, *The New Program of Religious Education,* p. 40)

and

We must ask what part our instruction is having in the making of Christians. We must measure all our success in terms of the child's response to our efforts. We must realize that we have failed except as we have caused the child's spiritual nature to unfold and his character to grow toward the Christ ideal. (Betts, *How to Teach Religion,* p. 39)

Professor Betts would encourage discrimination in the use of Biblical material. He desires children to accept the ideals of Jesus. He, like Professor Athearn, recognizes the continuity of religion with life. "Theological niceties and ecclesiastical distinctions have", he says, "a small and decreasing interest for the great mass of persons to-day who are interested in religion." Ideals of social welfare and to some extent at least of social transformation form a part of his aim.

"The world" is being interpreted in a new sense as the environment in which our lives must be lived, and this "world" may itself be transformed to make it a favorable medium in which to cultivate a soul. (Betts, *The New Program of Religious Education,* p. 38)

Professor Betts' books are forward looking. They express, to some extent at any rate, the point of view of liberal Christianity. They have a tendency, however, to leave the reader with certain questions in mind on which he might desire further information. Such questions as these:

1. What is Dr. Betts' view of the function of ideas? Is he still under the partial domination of the old theory that "information" is antecedent to "application"? The members of the "great trio" in his threefold aim—"fruitful knowledge", "right attitudes", "skill in living"—seem to be relatively independent of one another.

2. How far does Dr. Betts recognize the educational effect of the entire social environment? Although there is stress on activity, one finds comparatively little effort to control the children's entire environment in the interest of desired responses.

3. Jesus is central in Dr. Betts' purpose. How then would he explain his suggestion that material from the Old Testament representing an idea of God unlike Jesus' idea be used for children's first religious teaching? (See *How to Teach Religion,* p. 115.)

4. In what sense does Dr. Betts urge a child "to accept the life of Jesus as the ideal and pattern for his own"? Both liberals and conservatives say this. One needs to have some idea of the implications in the writer's mind.

5. Liberal Christians hold it to be one of the purposes of religion *to evaluate experience* on the basis of Christian standards, judging their own actions, their surroundings, and religion itself. This objective does not appear in Dr. Betts' statements.

In his book, *Childhood and Character, Professor Hartshorne* of the University of Southern California gives this definition of religious education:

Religious education, therefore, is the process by which the individual, in response to a controlled environment, achieves a progressive, conscious, social adjustment, dominated by the spirit of brotherhood, and so directed as to promote the growth of a social order based on regard for the worth and destiny of every individual. (Hartshorne, *Childhood and Character,* p. 5)

On aims he says:

The goal of religious education for the individual is thus seen to be the completely socialized will, expressed in a life which is sharing increasingly in the knowledge and work of an eternal society, and in the joy of human and divine companionship—in a word, world-citizenship.

The goal of religious education for society is the reorganization of institutions and enterprises in such a way as to provide for all individuals the stimulus of the religious heritage of the race, and equal opportunities for health, education, work, play and worship—in a word, world-brotherhood. (*Ibid.,* p. 6.)

Dr. Hartshorne's distinctive contribution to the literature of aims lies in his analysis of the attitudes which religious education of this type seeks to stimulate.

Religious education, if it be Christian, strives for the cultivation of Christian attitudes. It makes for the growth of the broadest possible outlook on life. It is interested primarily in the associations which are permanent and universal, and it thinks of the individuals so associated as members of a permanent and universal family—the children of God. (Hugh Hartshorne, *Worship in the Sunday School,* p. 6)

"Worship", according to Dr. Hartshorne, is a "means by which the leader controls the group to develop attitudes of social value". While he holds that the attitudes characteristic of Christianity should be thought of as actual responses to concrete situations, he suggests that they may be grouped under the following general heads—Gratitude, Good Will, Reverence, Faith, Loyalty.

Professor Coe, of Teachers College, Columbia University, and the late *Dr. Henry F. Cope,* secretary of the Religious Education Association, are agreed in advocating as the inclusive aim of religious education the reconstruction of society into a democracy—the democracy of God.

In his *Social Theory of Religious Education,* Professor Coe states the aim of Christian education to be:

> Growth of the young toward and into mature and efficient devotion to the democracy of God, and happy self-realization therein. (Coe, *Social Theory,* p. 55)

The aim as expressed in Dr. Cope's latest book, *Organizing the Church School,* is

> . . . that men may effectively will this human living of ours, this world society, in spiritual terms, terms that make possible social good-will, instead of warring lust for things. Religious education seeks to develop in men the purposes and abilities of the Christian social order. (Cope, *Organizing the Church School,* p. 18)

Professor Coe discusses the implications of social purpose as regards nearly all of the present issues of

religion mentioned in this study. While he does not formulate definite objectives on all the issues in question, he has produced a philosophy of religious education quite consonant with the fundamental positions of liberal Christianity. At the present time, his book, *The Social Theory of Religious Education,* is the only thoroughgoing treatment in print of the principles of religious education from a liberal standpoint. Perhaps Dr. Coe's most significant contribution to the literature of aims in religious education is his insistence on the necessity of deliberative group action and of revaluing traditional and widely accepted values. He maintains that the scientific attitude, the attitude of social appraisal, is fundamental to the Democracy of God and that this attitude can be stimulated in even very young children.

> Society as it now exists is quite willing to support an educational policy that makes for negative goodness and for conventional goodness; society would go as far, if it knew how, as to produce in its children the "rock-ribbed" fidelity to principle that constitutes character in the third sense. Up to this point religious education includes, or fuses with, whatever there is in "general" education that effectively socializes children. But beyond this point there lie, not the highways of social conformity, but the mountain trails of social reconstruction. Not the will that is conformed even to what is good in conventional social standards, but the will that is transformed into the likeness of the divine democracy that is far beyond and far above, is the character that Christianity has to produce. (Coe, *Social Theory of Religious Education,* p. 185.)

Dr. Coe has given us little explicit guidance upon the use of the Bible beyond the statement that "if the curriculum is fundamentally a course in Christian living, the Bible will be so used at each turn of the child's experience as to help him with the particular problem that is then uppermost". It is however justifiable to suppose that his position would be substantially that of the liberal writers quoted in Chapter I.

The statements of these six men are given as samples. Among the progressive writers in the field of religious education, exponents of other types have not been found.[1]

[1] If this chapter were an attempt to evaluate contributions, it would be necessary to name many not included here. This is however simply an attempt to find the drift of opinion on particular points.

CHAPTER V

Objectives Announced by Organizations for Religious Education

Do the objectives controlling the organizations for religious education represent the educational purposes implicit in the liberal movement? It is not easy to answer this question. Such printed material as is available for examination often fails to reveal with exactness the basis of the policies pursued, even if the policies themselves are clearly stated. Furthermore, the purposes expressed in such formal documents as official constitutions and the like must almost of necessity be relatively general and therefore unilluminating as to specific interpretations and issues.

Some light may be thrown on the problem, however, by a brief study of the announced objectives of the leading agencies for religious education, both denominational and interdenominational, as these are expressed in constitutions, periodical reports, and other statements in which purposes are set forth.

Denominational Agencies

For the purposes of this inquiry an examination has been made of the agencies for religious education in the ten Protestant denominations having the largest

number of members, as given in the Year Book of Churches, published for the Federal Council in 1923. They are, in order of their size: Methodist Episcopal, Southern Baptist Convention, National Baptist Convention, Methodist Episcopal South, Presbyterian (U. S. A.), Northern Baptist Convention, Disciples, Protestant Episcopal, Congregational, and United Lutheran. With them were included, as representing significant and somewhat different views, the religious education organizations of the Society of Friends (orthodox), and the Unitarians.

The present forms of organization for religious education in these denominations, as in Protestant denominations generally, represent a development of several functions which most of the Protestant churches have been discharging for many years; that is—(1) the business of publishing Sunday-school books and other religious literature, (2) the promotion and administration of church-schools and of denominational academies and colleges, including the raising of scholarships, (3) young people's work in denominational societies such as the Epworth League, and (4) preparing and editing curriculum material.[1] With the increased interest in religious education characteristic of the last few years, there has been a movement to unite these functions—and sometimes others—into a single agency for a denomination. In some denominations no union has yet taken place; in others a real

[1] This chapter does not deal with the aims expressed in Sunday-school text books and other curriculum material. They will be considered in Chapter VI.

fusion has been effected; in still others there is a combination of several boards, each keeping its own autonomy.

Where a uniting of forces is found, it marks the acceptance of a broad field for religious education, and provides for the administration of various related activities in the same general field under the direction of a single unified policy.

When one studies the expressed aims of the various denominational organizations for religious education, one is struck with the absence for the most part of any definite position whatsoever concerning the issues in modern life which liberal Christians regard as supremely important. Apparently the agencies make few attempts to analyze the implications of such general purposes as are set down in their constitutions. Typical of these general objectives are the following:

> The object of this Board shall be to promote the general educational interests of the Church, to conserve the religious life of the students in the educational institutions of the Church; in State Universities, and in other schools; to stimulate the supply of candidates for the ministry; to administer the work of ministerial education for coöperating Synods, and to render financial aid to educational institutions. (Constitution of the Board of Education of the United Lutheran Church of America, p. 7.)

> It shall be the duty of said Board to found Sunday Schools in needy neighborhoods; to contribute to the support of Sunday Schools requiring assistance; to educate the Church in all phases of Sunday School work, constantly endeavoring to raise ideals and improve methods; to determine the Sunday School curriculum, including the courses

for teacher training; and in general, to give impulse and direction to the study of the Bible in the Church. It shall also be the duty of said Board, after consultation with the Editor of Sunday School Publications, to recommend to the Book Committee the kind and character of literature, requisites, supplies, etc., needed for use in our Sunday Schools, and the Publishing Agents shall provide and publish such literature, requisites, and supplies as, in the judgment of the Book Committee, the best interests of the Church may demand. It shall also be the duty of said Board to promote such organizations as the organized Bible classes, Brotherhoods, and kindred organizations. (Board of Sunday Schools of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1920. Discipline, page 468)

The object of this organization shall be to win and hold its members for Christ, to promote in them an earnest and intelligent spiritual life, to bring them into loyal Church membership, and to train them in Christian service. (Constitution of the Junior Epworth League.)

The objects of the Union are: (a) to foster the religious life, (b) to bring the young people of our several churches into closer relations with one another, and (c) to spread rational views of religion and to put into practice such principles of life and duty as tend to uplift mankind. The cardinal principles of the Union are truth, worship, and service. (Young People's Religious Union of the Unitarian Societies, Year Book, 1921-1922, page 51.)

It should be noted that in several denominations there appears to be included in the functions of religious education agencies, the duty of giving expert educational advice and of leading the denomination into new educational adventures. Some phrases in

the constitutions quoted illustrate this. There are other instances. The By-Laws of the Board of Education of the Northern Baptist Convention declare that "It shall be the duty of the Board of Education to develop the educational convictions of the churches represented in the Northern Baptist Convention". The Unitarian Department of Religious Education seeks "to introduce and encourage modern methods in religious education in the Unitarian churches". And the secretary of the Board of Education of the Disciples of Christ announces as one of the objectives of his Board, "To foster an educational spirit and awaken an educational conscience among Disciples of Christ". His appeal to the Church is noteworthy:

> One cannot be a Christian in the highest sense without being educational in outlook, in desire and purpose. Every devoted follower of Christ is a devout "searcher after truth." . . . There is an intellectualism which is barren of spiritual fruitage, and there is a sickly sentimentalism which parades itself as spirituality. . . . Let the church awake. Let her cease her suspicious attitude in matters of the intellect. Let her throw herself with abandon into the great undertaking of higher education and sanctify it to the glory of God and the redemption of mankind. (Report of the Board of Education of the Disciples of Christ, Sept. 1923, p. 9.)

Occasionally reference is made to the ultimate aim of bringing in the Kingdom of God. In a report of the Presbyterian Board, one finds this statement:

> Christian education seeks not only to impart knowledge, increase skill, promote efficiency and develop personality,

but *so* to develop the maturing personality that all of its powers and attainments will be used in accordance with the will of God for the establishment of that kingdom of righteousness and brotherhood without which the world can never know lasting peace and the fullest freedom. (1919 Year Book, Council of Church Boards of Education, p. 36.)

Here we have as an end, the developing of *individuals* for the Kingdom of God. In the aims of the Episcopal Church there is a further recognition of the *parish* as a social unit for reconstruction. Thus, the Episcopal Church "affirms for the parish this educational aim: So to nurture the growth of each individual, especially the child, that he may attain the 'mind of Christ' and by his efficiency in the parish, assist it to lift the life of the community into that of the Kingdom of God." (*The Educational Opportunity of the Churchman*, 1922, p. 11.)

There is no expressed desire on the part of any one of the boards to consider theories of social organization or to attack institutionalized social abuses. Apparently this is looked upon as outside their province. An expression of social idealism, however, which is full of practical implications is found in the report submitted in 1915 by the Commission on Moral and Religious Education of the Congregational churches. It says in part:

It has come to be recognized that the welfare of Protestant Christianity, as a mere question of growth, will depend very largely upon its educational processes. More fundamental than that, the problem of moral control in

a democracy is in the last analysis, a question of religion. Religion deals with the roots of life from which character and conduct spring. One of its essential functions is to establish the kind of moral attitude in men and women which shall purify society, insuring social justice and economic righteousness. It goes beyond the ethics of custom and social contract by carrying the issue to the final court where God is the judge. (Minutes of the National Council, 1915, p. 376.)

And in the Year Book of the Board of Sunday Schools of the Methodist Episcopal Church for 1922, some paragraphs in a statement made by Professor George A. Coe are quoted, accompanied by these remarks:

I am at liberty to quote from this statement some trenchant sentences bearing upon the necessity for a frank facing of the charge that our present system of religious education is little short of futile.

. . . Then this man with keen insight points out how the great issues of a warless world, and economic justice, and intellectual honesty, find small purposeful place in our present system of religious education.

. . . In some effective way we must bring the entire church to a realization of the fact that the moral energy which she must have to meet the demands of the human world depends on the quality of religious education given childhood and youth. (Report of Corresponding Secretary, p. 64 ff.)

With but few exceptions, such as have been mentioned—where the general influence of liberal educational standards can be recognized and where an en-

larged social consciousness is apparent—the denominational agencies for religious education fail to express positive attitudes upon the crucial questions of religion. They fail to give guidance on the use of the Bible, the significance of dogma, the relationship of the religion of Jesus to modern life, the Christian's attitude towards his own and other nations, the value of ecclesiastical institutions, and other burning questions of the day.

The absence of positive guidance is probably due to one or more of the following causes:

(1) *Failure to recognize the importance of definite educational objectives.*

Apparently some of the leaders of the denominational agencies are deceived by the same "illusion" to which Professor Miller refers in a discussion of college life. He says:

> The great college illusion is the faith that the accumulation of buildings, "courses", degrees, and students characteristic of the last fifty years is a progress in education. In other words, the illusion is that you can attain the purpose of education without trying to attain it, without knowing definitely what it is, without seeking till you find the definite means that will secure it; that you can find it by letting it take care of itself.
>
> . . . The great illusion is but a case of the human failing that may be called occupationism (an ugly word for an ugly fact)—a physician might call it a form of occupation-psychosis; that is, the continued operation of the machinery with its daily details, the carrying on of the occupation according to custom quite crowds out the question what it is for and whether it compasses its end.

(Dickinson Miller, The Great College Illusion, in the *New Republic,* June 22, 1921.)

(2) *Reliance upon the positions already formulated by the churches concerned—in creed, catechism, canon, etc., or through other departments of church activity—and the expectation that fundamental policies have already been, or should be, the concern of the church at large.*

The business of the department of religious education has been thought of as having to do with the *How,* not the *What* of teaching religion. Usually the departments have taken for granted the generally accepted point of view of their constituencies. Sometimes they act under definite instructions, as in the case of the Southern Baptist Board of Education when the last Convention adopted the following resolution:

> That, in view of the fact that the claim is being constantly, and with justification, made that text books can not be found for the departments of science free from erroneous statements with reference to evolution, our Education Board begin at once to seek for Christian scientists, who will prepare text books for all departments of science which will rightly relate science to the Bible and who will set forth the fact that the majority of the greatest men of science have repudiated Darwinism except as an unproven working hypothesis. (Baptist Education Bulletin, May, 1923, p. 14.)

(3) *Fear of alienating members of their group if definite positions are taken on certain contested points.*

In some of the Protestant denominations there is such a wide divergence of conviction even on essential points that the educational departments are in obvious difficulty. The central tenets of the church do not

touch at all upon certain vital issues; on other issues the teachings may be—and are—"interpreted" in various ways, with the result that faithful members of the same denomination may hold antagonistic views as to the fundamental direction which their education should take. Under the circumstances one is perhaps justified in suspecting a tendency to "play safe" on the part of many of the denominational educational agencies when it comes to stating their objectives.

In certain noteworthy cases, denominational agencies, organized for functions other than religious education, are conspicuous in that they have not taken a subservient or neutral attitude. For instance, the Department of Christian Social Service of the Protestant Episcopal Church declares its function to be "to interpret to the Church not only what social service means but to suggest also some things social service does not mean". The Methodist Federation for Social Service, an agency which is officially recognized by the Methodist Episcopal Church although it receives no financial appropriation from the Church, has taken a clear-cut stand upon a number of vital questions, conceiving its duty to be the proposal of definite objectives and the education of the church constituency to the understanding and acceptance of these objectives. Thus, the Federation formulated the "Social Creed" which was adopted by the Methodist Church in 1908 and later accepted, with additional clauses, by the Federal Council of Churches as well as by many Protestant denominations and other religious agencies

—the statement now generally known as "The Social Ideals of the Churches."

The time may come when denominational agencies for religious education are driven—by the force of their own convictions, by compulsion from within their constituencies, or by social pressure from outside—to declare their purposes in terms of the major issues confronting religious leaders of our generation. At present they appear to be for the most part, either ignorant of the educational demands of liberal Christianity or indifferent to them, or in some other manner outside of them, or at least not consciously inside.

Interdenominational Agencies

The Year Book of the Churches for 1923 lists twenty-four "service organizations" under the general heading of "Religious Education".[2] They are:

1. American Sunday School Union.
2. Biblical Seminary in New York.[3]
3. Commission on Christian Education (Federal Council).
4. Committee on Friendly Relations among Foreign Students.
5. Committee on the War and the Religious Outlook (Federal Council).
6. Conference of Church Workers in Universities of the North Central Region.
7. Conference of Church Workers in Universities of the U. S.

[2] Year Book of the Churches, 1923, pp. 309 ff.

[3] The reason that this organization appears in the above list is not clear, but since it was included there it has seemed best to include it in this study.

8. Conference of Theological Seminaries and Colleges in the U. S. and Canada.
9. Council of Church Boards of Education.
10. International Association of Daily Vacation Bible Schools.
11. International Council of Religious Education.
12. International Sunday School Lesson Committee.
13. Magna Charta Day Association.[4]
14. Missionary Education Movement.
15. Religious Education Association.
16. Students Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions.
17. Sunday School Council of Evangelical Denominations.
18. United Society of Christian Endeavor.
19. World Association of Daily Vacation Bible Schools.
20. World Brotherhood Federation.
21. World's Student Christian Federation.
22. World's Sunday School Association.
23. Young Men's Christian Association.
24. Young Women's Christian Association.

These organizations represent various lines of special interest. Eight of them (Nos. 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 16, 21) are concerned primarily with the religious interests of *students;* two (Nos. 1, 2) exist mainly for the *teaching of the Bible;* four (Nos. 4, 13, 14, 16) are devoted to *missionary activities and the promoting of international friendships;* the remaining twelve (Nos. 5, 10, 11, 12, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24) are more general in character.[5]

[4] The reason that this organization appears in the above list is not clear, but since it was included there it has seemed best to include it in this study.

[5] Nos. 4 and 16 concern both students and missionary activities and are therefore counted under both headings.

Material on all the organizations enumerated has been collected and examined in order to determine whether or not the expressed purposes of each organization showed indications of the attitudes characteristic of liberal Christianity.

The accompanying chart reveals in a rough fashion the result of this study.[6] Where there was apparent agreement in one or more respects with the liberal position (as presented in Chapters I and II) this was indicated by a plus sign (+). Where evidence disclosed an opposing position this was indicated by a minus sign (—). In two instances where organizations expressed conflicting points of view on the same issue, both signs were used (±).

(See Chart on opposite page)

The chart may be misleading. In interpreting it, the following facts should be kept in mind:

(1) The examination was restricted to such *printed* material as was available. Informal inquiry of present leaders of the various organizations might bring forth different results.

(2) A plus (+) does not mean that the organization in question should necessarily be counted as entirely liberal on any given issue, but as liberal in one or more respects. The like caution should be observed when a minus sign appears.

(3) A blank may indicate either that the issue was

[6] Nos. 6, 7, 8, and 17 do not appear on the chart. Nos. 6, 7, 8 exist only for conference and have scarcely any printed literature. No. 17 has gone out of existence.

Organization Number	1	2	3	4	5	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	*Total*
I. Bible	—	—	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	+	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	$\frac{+1}{-2} = -1$
II. Dogma	—	—	..	..	+	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	—	—	..	+	±	—	—	—	$\frac{+3}{-8} = -5$
III. Jesus	—	—	..	..	+	..	..	..	..	..	+	+	..	..	..	+	..	..	..	..	$\frac{+4}{-2} = +2$
IV. Social Welfare	—	..	..	+	+	..	..	..	..	..	+	+	..	—	..	+	..	..	..	+	$\frac{+6}{-2}$ $+6 = +4$
V. Reconstruction of Society	—	..	..	+	+	..	..	..	..	..	+	+	..	..	..	+	..	..	..	+	$-1 = +5$
VI. Political State	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	+	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	+	$+2 = +2$
VII. International Interracial Relations	..	..	+	+	±	..	..	..	..	—	+	..	+	+	..	+	+	..	..	+	$\frac{+9}{-2} = +7$
VIII. Human Nature	..	—	..	+	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	+	..	..	..	..	..	—	..	..	$\frac{+2}{-2} = +0$
IX. Educational Process	..	+	..	+	..	+	..	+	+	..	..	+	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	+	$+7 = +7$
X. The Church	..	..	..	+	..	..	..	..	..	+	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	$+2 = +2$

not touched upon at all or that no positive stand for or against the liberal position could be discovered.

(4) Neglect to take a positive stand upon any specific issue may be due to the fact that consideration of the issue is outside the declared function of the organization. Many of the blanks may be thus explained.

In spite of these suggested limitations in our interpretation, it is clear that the results of this inquiry are vitally significant. A brief survey of the main conclusions will indicate the tendencies of interdenominational organizations of the present day in their relation to the demands of liberalism.

1. Reconstruction in the use of the Bible in religious education is not declared to be an important purpose by any one of these organizations.

Is this because such reconstruction is thought to be no longer necessary to-day? Evidence suggests that such is the position of the Religious Education Association:

> To the superficial reader it may seem strange that the early conventions of the R. E. A. had a great deal more to say about the scientific and the historical methods of Bible study than have the later ones. That early emphasis was simply the declaration of the new discovery which we have mentioned, that the scientific method opened up to us a religion that was worth teaching. (H. F. Cope, Twenty Years' Progress in Religious Education, in *Religious Education,* Oct. 1923, p. 309.)

Two organizations among those listed align themselves definitely *against* the point of view of liberal

Christianity in regard to the Bible. In its annual report one of them makes this declaration:

> They [the leaders of the American Sunday School Union] thoroughly believe in applying sound educational principles to the Christian training of the young wherever it is undertaken, whether in weekday or on Sunday. They, however, lay primary emphasis on the Bible not as a book of literature, history, information, or of character. They believe that primarily it contains God's message of Salvation in His Gospel of grace, and that this message is not for the adult alone, but should be presented to the child and the growing boy and girl in forms adapted to their stage of development and made interesting and convincing to their understanding. (The One Hundred and Sixth Annual Report of the American Sunday School Union, 1923, p. 7.)

The other organization, in speaking of Bible study, says:

> The student is trained in first hand, direct study of the Bible in his own tongue, with reliance upon the Holy Spirit for guidance. He is taught to take a new view of the facts, without the limiting influence of any previous theory or doctrine. On this point, however, he must guard against the idea that the past can teach him little or nothing.
>
> He is taught to read nothing into the Scriptures, but to learn to draw from them all they are intended to yield the searcher for truth. (Catalogue of the Biblical Seminary in New York, 1923-1924, p. 16.)

and furthermore:

> Various schools, by devoting too much attention to the externals of Biblical knowledge, such as critical questions of Scriptural history and literature, had fostered the specu-

lative type of student until a destructive Biblical scholarship resulted. (*Ibid.*, p. 15.)

A great many of the organizations on the list are concerned with teaching the Bible and refer to its importance, but no one of them—with the exception of the three mentioned—gives any clear indication of the point of view from which the Bible is to be taught.

2. The issues on which the organizations express themselves most clearly as having purposes characteristic of liberal Christianity are the issues relating to international and inter-racial problems.

While on the whole, the organizations are silent or non-committal upon the Bible, upon these issues many of them express themselves in unmistakably liberal terms.

Noteworthy among the expressions of liberalism are the following:

The World Brotherhood Federation holds as one of its cardinal principles that men and women everywhere, are at heart kindly and well-disposed, although their goodwill is only too often overlaid by unworthy traits; and it is to this great body of goodwill in all lands that the Federation issues its Challenge and is striving to bring its Message of World Brotherhood. That this Brotherhood basis exists in Germany in large measure, the following pages show; and it is in the hope and belief that this Report may help to restore a better understanding between nations which ought never to have been sundered that the British Council of the World Brotherhood Federation have ordered it to be published. (Foreword in pamphlet on Brotherhood Mission to

Germany in 1922, published by the World Brotherhood Federation.)

Resolved: That it is our conviction that the further use of war as an instrument for the settlement of disputes should be abolished, and that war between nations should be declared to be a public crime and should be outlawed. (Y. W. C. A. Seventh National Convention, April 20-27, 1922. Report, p. 337.)

To bring students of all countries into mutual understanding and sympathy, to lead them to realize that the principles of Jesus Christ should rule in international relationships, and to endeavor by so doing to draw the nations together. (From the purpose of the World's Student Christian Federation.)

With special reference to graded materials it may be said that the literature especially planned for children and young people with the purpose of cultivating a spirit of world friendship and opening up to them practical forms of expression of Christian helpfulness to their neighbors and to those of distant lands is perhaps the most significant feature of the Movement's work. (Typewritten statement of the work of the Missionary Education Movement, used by special permission.)

In the future, however, the missionary will also have a friendly appreciation of the vital truths in non-Christian thinking and literature. (*Missionary Outlook in the Light of the War,* published by the Committee on War and the Religious Outlook, p. 227.)

It should no longer be possible for the Christian missionary in any land to take the position that he is racially superior to those whom he is attempting to reach with his gospel message. (*Ibid.,* p. 240.)

The nations are groping almost desperately after some way of living together in peace. The only enduring bonds of peace are forged in friendships. . . . Can Christians cry, "peace, peace," and deny the simple obligations of kindness and goodwill? How shall they fight national antagonisms as a church if as individuals they deny fellowship to the best representatives of other races?" (Pamphlet published by the Committee on Friendly Relations with Foreign Students.)

Only two organizations of those studied were found to express attitudes on international questions which were other than liberal. The Committee on *War and the Religious Outlook,* while clearly liberal on many points, apparently considers that war has sometimes a generally purifying effect. In *War and the Religious Outlook,* by Robert E. Speer, one finds these statements:

In the first place, in spite of all the harmful effects of the war upon men's lives, the net result of the experience of the young manhood and womanhood of the nation during the years of war will probably be found to have been good. It has been a great educational discipline. . . . It has magnified in men's minds the significance of moral and spiritual values. (pp. 10-11.)

and again,

Most clearly of all has the war reaffirmed the glory of Christ and the validity of His Gospel. (p. 18.)

One of the organizations, the International Magna Charta Day Association, is apparently planned to unite the English speaking world for the purpose of

"holding together and presenting a common front to the enemy". In its statement, it urges the public "to remember the fact that the Anglo-Saxon race has kept the light of its lamp of liberty shining clearly and definitely ahead of every other race", and goes on to declare that "the movement is bigger than any race, but it does not lose sight of the fact that one race has done more than all other people to give us the civil and religious liberty we enjoy". This is the only organization listed whose entire point of view on international relations appears definitely not in accord with that of liberal Christianity.

3. Indications of liberal tendencies in regard to the educational process are largely confined to a desire on the part of several agencies to carry on research of a scientific and scholarly character.

This desire was expressed in the Annual Report for 1922 of the Executive Secretary of the Council of the Church Boards of Education when he said:

> The fundamental task of the Council is that of research. This is true because the enterprises of Christian education must be built upon the basis of knowledge. There is nothing quite so eloquent as a fact. There are some things that we may and should *know*. (Annual Report, published in *Christian Education,* Vol. VI, No. 5, p. 229.)

The International Council of Religious Education and the International Lesson Committee regard research as one of their functions; as do the two Christian Associations, and the Religious Education Association.

In a recent editorial in *Religious Education,* the of-

ficial organ of the Religious Education Association, we find this statement:

> The outstanding need in religious education is the scientific examination and testing of current activity and processes, the measurement of results and the discovery of sound methods. To this the high aim of religious education and the critical need of the hour call for the devotion of all our spiritual purposes, of all available scientific efficiency, and of every necessary resource. (*Religious Education,* June, 1923, Vol. XVIII, No. 3, p. 154.)

The Biblical Seminary is in favor of independent investigation and unbiased study:

> Thorough investigation is encouraged, and the fullest consideration is afforded both sides of any debatable question. Students are expected to decide for themselves. Every encouragement is given to serious, impartial, and unbiased study. (*Catalogue,* Biblical Seminary in New York, 1923-1924, p. 18.)

4. Practically no tendency is shown to protest against the teaching of traditional dogmas, or to reinterpret ancient phraseology in terms of to-day.

Two exceptions are noteworthy. The Committee on the War and the Religious Outlook, in two of its published reports, has been decidedly liberal. For instance:

> So far as traditional theology or forms of expression are foreign to our manner of thinking in the present day, the responsibility sharply confronts us to find terminology that is in keeping with modern knowledge and experience. (*Religion Among American Men,* p. 139.)

Not theology but Jesus brings the world to repentance. (*The Missionary Outlook in the Light of the War*, p. 227.)

The World Brotherhood Federation declares itself definitely against creedal tests:

A constitution was drafted on broad lines, breathing the spirit of brotherhood as taught and exemplified in the life and spirit of Jesus Christ. It was emphatically declared that the movement was to be non-sectarian and undenominational, entirely free from the bias of party politics and no social distinctions to be regarded among the members. No creed was to be imposed upon the members nor any test applied. The great principle laid down in the Book of Revelation was to be the prevailing policy: "Behold, I have set before thee an open door and no man can shut it." An applicant for membership was to be asked only one question: What is your name and address? At the same time great care was taken to emphasize the fact that it was essentially and preëminently a religious Movement. The motto adopted was: "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brothers." It was declared that "The Bible is our guide" and the primary object of the Movement was stated to be "To lead men into the Kingdom of God!" (President's address, Proceedings of the World Brotherhood Conference, 1921, p. 9.)

Several of the organizations include in their official statements a doctrinal affirmation of more or less definiteness expressed in traditional forms, such as the following:

To lead students to accept the Christian faith in God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, according to the Scriptures, and to live as true disciples of Jesus Christ. (Quo Vadis,

A Review of the World's Student Christian Federation—a portion of the Constitution.)

Affirming the Christian faith in God the Father; and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord and Saviour; and in the Holy Spirit, the Revealer of Truth and Source of power for life and service; according to the teaching of Holy Scripture and the witness of the Church, we adopt the following Constitution. (Preamble to the Constitution of the Y. W. C. A., Report of the Seventh National Convention, p. 345.)

On its Biblical side, it is established upon the historic doctrines of the church, such as, the Trinity, the Deity of Christ, His Virgin Birth, His Death and Resurrection, the Atonement, and the Inspiration of the Scriptures. (Information sheet on the Biblical Seminary in New York.)

We find it our special joy to teach of Christ. His eternal deity, His true humanity, His sinless holiness, His perfect oneness with the Father. We emphasize His matchless teachings, His deeds of mercy, His atoning death, His bodily resurrection, His intercession for believers, His coming triumph. (One Hundred and Sixth Annual Report, American Sunday School Union, p. 8.)

The Young Men's Christian Associations seek to unite those young men who, regarding Jesus Christ as their God and Saviour, according to the Holy Scriptures, desire to be His disciples in their doctrine and in their life, and to associate their efforts for the extension of His Kingdom among men. (*The Paris Basis*, adopted in 1855 and still representing the objective of the Association.)

The fact that many of the organizations are silent when it comes to matters of doctrine is probably significant. Various explanations for this are possible.

In some cases, it undoubtedly does indicate an actual shifting of emphasis to other issues. It may, however, be due to a desire not to offend or to cause dissension. Or perhaps no definite doctrinal statement was included simply because the expression of any such statement was considered outside the province of that particular organization.

5. It is interesting to note that the church and the political state receive approximately an equal measure of neglect.

While all the organizations are interdenominational and to that extent liberal, other indications of a liberal attitude towards the church are rare. Indeed they reduce themselves to a very few statements like the following, where the church is frankly criticized:

> It is the failure really to know the facts and to keep apace with the more complex problems of modern life that has led many men with a passion for social service and brotherhood to realize their ends apart from the Church. It is this which has kept the Church content to walk in paths already blazed, to devote itself to dispensing charity rather than to securing justice, to relieving need rather than to removing causes that make relief necessary. It has cared for the sick and the maimed, but has not been concerned with securing working conditions that would safeguard human values in the factory. It has fed the hungry, but has not struck at the industrial conditions that are chiefly responsible for poverty. It has established missions for those who were "down and out," but it has not directed its energies to modifying the system of casual labor that every year throws thousands of men out of work and helps to replenish the ranks of the "down and

out," faster than the Church can rescue them. The problem of social justice is the one great ethical problem which the Churches have not seriously touched. And this has been because they did not really understand the economic forces that were at work. (*The Church and Industrial Reconstruction,* p. 224.)

In the same report a plea is made for more fellowship within the Church:

When all is said and done, it remains true that whatever else the Church may do to secure the adoption of Christian principles in social relationships, its greatest opportunity in this direction lies in actually being, in its own corporate life, the kind of a brotherhood which it proclaims as the social ideal. If it is not itself a truly democratic fellowship, it will have pitiably small influence in securing a brotherly fellowship in the world at large. (*Ibid.,* p. 236.)

Such demands on the Church are not found in these organizations except in this single instance.

Nor do most of the organizations studied commit themselves to liberal attitudes towards the state except in so far as such attitudes are implied in progressive statements on social reconstruction and international and inter-racial problems. A notable exception to the rule is the Missionary Education Movement, whose recent volumes on home missions (published under the names of single authors but prepared in cooperation with a committee and with the official sanction of the organization) are conspicuously liberal in attitude.[7] In this connection also, the efforts of the

[7] See citations above, pp. 50 and 51.

Young Women's Christian Association in legislation for women should be mentioned.

Does this lack of positive aim in reference to both church and state indicate an apathetic attitude toward these historic institutions? Here again, one must be cautious in drawing inferences. One must remember, for instance, that nearly all these organizations are vitally connected with churches and that when they advocate reform movements of one kind or another they are working for reforms within the churches. It does seem clear, however, that the interdenominational organizations on this list do not, as a whole, encourage the vigorous criticism of church and state characteristic of liberal Christianity, nor are they disposed as a part of their purpose to insist upon a more adequate functioning of these institutions.

6. If we could discover on what conceptions of the make-up of human nature the purposes of these organizations were based, such discovery would be of great value. Only a few fragmentary phrases give us a clue.

> The bare individual, as such, is an abstraction; he exists only in relationships. . . .
>
> . . . And men must be evangelized not only as social beings but as social beings with specific functions in society. (*The Church and Industrial Reconstruction,* pp. 216, 217.)

> The aim therefore is not merely to impart information, but to develop character, to encourage to as holy a life as it is possible for a pardoned sinner to live. (*Catalogue,* Biblical Seminary, 1923-24, p. 18.)

A united protestant effort to plant in the heart life of the childhood of Europe the seed of the true gospel will bring a fruitage to this age of Christian leadership equal to, if not greater, than has been given in the past. (*Year Book*, World's Sunday School Association, 1923, p. 16.)

. . . Those who thus focused attention on children discovered that they were living persons, that they lived with others, in a society from which they could not be separated, and that this living person we seek to educate is not an individual, but a part of that social whole of humanity in which the very reality and the inspiring purpose of religion is found. Religious education could not face the child and miss the world. (Cope, Twenty Years' Progress in Religious Education, in *Religious Education*, Oct., 1923, p. 313.)

The first and last of the references cited reveal a recognition of the social character of personality exceedingly significant for religious education. It is worthy of note that we find an explicit statement of this recognition in the case of only two out of the twenty-four organizations.

7. Social welfare and the reconstruction of society are included in the purposes of a considerable number of the organizations studied. Liberal attitudes on one of these issues apparently include similar attitudes on the other issue. Social welfare and social regeneration go together. In almost every case, these are clearly connected with Christian ideals, and direct reference is made to the principles of Jesus.

Only in the case of two of the organizations does one find the inclination to contrast "spiritual" and "social";

Christian Endeavor is essentially a spiritual organization. While its program includes physical and social activities of all sorts, these are regarded as merely means to an end. The primary purpose of the society is the spiritual development of young people. (Pamphlet, *Christian Endeavor in the Church,* by E. P. Gates, p. 2.)

The following are typical examples of interest in social welfare and in the reconstruction of society:

Resolved: That in the future we endeavor to secure a more widespread study of the social conditions of to-day and of the ways in which we can promote the principles of the Social Ideals of the Churches. (*Report of the Y. W. C. A.,* Seventh National Convention, April, 1922, p. 334.)

In general, then, we have moved in two main directions: toward the place where both religion and education have taken religious education with increasing seriousness and tend to include it in those great affairs of human life which have a scientific basis, and also, toward the recognition of religious education as a social necessity, as the hope of social salvation. If twenty years ago the agitation for religious education seemed to promise better Sunday schools, to-day it seems to offer the way of a new, and spiritual society. (Cope, *Twenty Years Progress in Religious Education,* Oct., 1923., p. 314.)

Its [the church's] failure, for example, to reach the labor movement more directly has been in large measure due to its failure to appreciate the significance of that movement. The Church has generally condemned it as materialistic, failing to see the genuinely spiritual undercurrent that lay beneath much of the demand for better wages, and hours, and status. It has not understood that, although the im-

mediate and conscious objective was more *material* goods, they were really craving these because they are the means to more complete self-realization and more abundant life. (*The Church and Industrial Reconstruction,* p. 224.)

But much of our so-called Christian civilization is still predominantly pagan, and students are more apt to adopt the un-Christian ideals of wealth and power, conquest and exploitation, than the Christian ideals of personal service and public good. Small wonder if these susceptible minds, finding themselves in Rome, straightway do as the Romans do, and find what we do as a nation to be so convincing that they cannot hear the voices of our preachers and prophets. Loud lament of these conditions comes from the mission fields, and Christian workers in America are under rather severe condemnation. (Leaflet, *Committee on Friendly Relations with Foreign Students.*)

8. Attention should be called to the fact that the International Council of Religious Education, probably the largest and most influential of all the agencies for religious education in the United States, fails to commit itself on any of the issues with which liberalism is concerned—with the exception of a recognition of the importance of scientific research. There is ground for hope in that the 1924 Year Book announces that two sub-committees, on Tendencies in Modern Education and on the Theory of the Curriculum, are at work on statements which they will "submit at a later time", but we have, as yet, no evidence that they have adopted anything new. At present, our investigation of the purposes of the organization yields little but negative results.

It is, perhaps, because they include a wider range of activities that the study of interdenominational agencies leads to more definite findings on the whole than was the case in our study of denominational agencies for religious education.

As indication of the present situation in regard to the demands of liberal Christianity, it may be interesting to note the relative prominence of liberal points of view on the several issues discussed. Giving one point's credit for any sign of liberal tendency (whether in one or more respects) and deducting a point for any indication of a tendency in opposition to the standpoints of liberalism, on the basis of data secured the issues range themselves as follows: [8]

International and interracial relations	7	points
Educational process (mainly research[9])	7	"
Reconstruction of society	5	"
Social welfare	4	"
Jesus	2	"
The Church	2	"
The Political state	2	"
Human Nature	0	"
The Bible	—1	"
Dogma	—5	"

This amazing curve is as much a surprise to the writer as it is likely to be to the reader. As a safeguard against error, correspondence with representatives of the various organizations was resorted to, but as yet nothing has been received which would lead to a modification of these findings.

[8] As indicated in the *total* column on the chart above, p. 97.
[9] This term is used broadly for investigation, rather than narrowly in university departments.

CHAPTER VI

Curriculum Objectives

Text-books for the religious education of Protestant children and young people furnish our next evidence as to the situation. How far do they show a recognition of the issues important for liberal Christianity and an attempt to meet them from a liberal point of view? Most of the denominations issue one or more lesson series which include text-books for every year of the twelve years of school life, with additional volumes for classes of "young people" and "adults". Non-denominational publishing houses produce material for general use. Societies such as the Epworth League and the United Society of Christian Endeavor prepare their own study courses. The recent movements for Daily Vacation Bible Schools and Week-day Schools of Religion have occasioned the output of much special material which is being issued to the public with astonishing rapidity.

It is not necessary for the purposes of this inquiry to make a thorough study of all available text books. In order to keep the investigation within reasonable limits and at the same time to give a fair survey of the present situation, the following lesson series have been selected:

1. The International Group-Uniform Series.
2. The International Graded Lessons.
3. The Scribner Completely Graded Series.
4. The Constructive Studies (published by the University of Chicago Press).
5. The Beacon Course of Graded Lessons (Unitarian).
6. The Christian Nurture Series (Protestant Episcopal).
7. The Abingdon Week Day Texts in Religion.
8. The Pilgrim Plan Books for Religious Education.

The basis upon which this selection was made was as follows:

The two International Series have been selected because they are the most widely used and because they have the official approval of the thirty-two Protestant denominations who coöperate through the International Council of Religious Education. While the International Lesson Committee is responsible for the topics, Bible passages, and memory verses used in all the texts issued, the actual text-books—including stories, comments, lesson aims, etc.—are prepared by the various coöperating denominations either individually or jointly as the case may be. To give variety to this investigation the books in the *International Group-Uniform Series* published by Northern Baptists have been studied; and for the *Graded Lessons,* the Methodist Episcopal texts.[1]

The *Scribner Series* and the *Constructive Studies* were chosen because, having been freely constructed to

[1] The same graded material (prepared by a syndicate of denominational publishing houses) is used officially in the Methodist Church South, the Congregational Church, and originally it was also used by the Presbyterians (U.S.A.).

supply a smaller and probably more discriminating market, they may be supposed to be relatively independent of traditional restrictions.

Two denominational series were included—the *Beacon Course,* and the *Christian Nurture Series.* One of these represents a denomination that is professedly liberal, and the other a denomination that seeks to be broad enough to represent Christianity in its totality.

The *Abingdon Week Day Texts* and the *Pilgrim Plan Books* have been chosen because they were constructed to meet the needs of week day schools—schools which are supposed to touch the conditions of modern life with unusual freedom.

It is believed that these series, taken as a whole, are representative of curriculum material in general use, and that they cannot fail to do justice to whatever liberalism there is in the official teaching of the Protestant churches. In the series selected all the text-books prepared for pupils in the kindergarten, elementary school, and high school have been reviewed; that is, books for pupils up to approximately eighteen years of age. Material for older students was not included in this survey.

It should be remembered that our concern is with the *objectives* for which these text-books were written. Occasionally effort has been required not to include in the study some consideration of the educational methods by which the stated objectives are to be carried out. But we have sternly limited the inquiry to the main question: How far do the *an-*

nounced aims of Protestant lesson material represent the educational purposes of liberal Christianity?[2] Here we have been embarrassed not by a lack of expressed aims but by a bewildering array of them. Many of the lesson series have formulated aims (1) for the entire series, (2) for each department, (3) for each week in the year. Thus it is possible for a single series to include 734 aims, and several series have approximately this number!

1. The International Group-Uniform Series

The Group-Uniform Series represents a combination of the old uniform-lesson plan whereby all the members of a church school studied the same Scripture passage on any given Sunday of the year, and the more recent plan for gradation of material by departments. The older students—"intermediates", "young people", and "adults"—follow the same Bible references, with adaptations in treatment for each department, but special topics and references are chosen for the Primary Department and again for the Junior Department. Kindergarten children are expected to use the two-year course in the Graded Lessons.

Quarterlies in this series, published by the American

[2] The *announced* aims may not always represent the *actual* purposes controlling the writers of the courses. In some cases, the authors and editors were no doubt influenced by a consideration of what it was feasible to present to the public. At any rate the aims as announced do serve to show *the present situation* in reference to curriculum material.

Baptist Publication Society for the first six months of the year 1924 were used for study.

The general aim of the series is stated to be:

> To nurture the growing moral and religious life of the child, and to lead to a permanent commitment of that life to God, through Jesus Christ, and to fitness for service in His Kingdom. (International Year Book of Religious Education, 1924, p. 49.)

and further, (p. 50)

> These lessons are predominantly Biblical; that is, they are selected, chiefly, from Biblical materials; and as a part of the moral and religious nurture which is their total purpose, they aim to impart a comprehensive knowledge of the Bible, and to afford to the pupil the disposition and the ability to use God's Word intelligently.

Aims are stated for each Sunday. These aims for the most part are relatively abstract and general and therefore not directly concerned with the concrete issues of life. They cannot be classed as a whole as representing the positions of liberalism or as positively opposed to them.

Many of the aims are exceedingly vague. For example: "To strengthen the pupils' faith in God as their Protector and Helper," and, "To show that God's love and care watches over those who serve Him." Each of these is to be accomplished in a single lesson.

Several of the aims are ambiguous. Whether they are liberal or the reverse depends on ideas to be associated with them. There is no evidence, however, of anything other than the traditional interpretation of

such aims as, "To strengthen the conviction that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and to increase in each heart the desire to accept Jesus as Leader and as Lord" or, "To show that Jesus has power over death and that those who believe in him shall have life everlasting".

In some of the aims liberal tendencies appear. A new appreciation of children of other races is certainly suggested by the lesson aim, "To acquaint the children with their world brothers and sisters and to help them realize that in the Father's sight all are equal". And in connection with a lesson on the fall of Jerusalem, the problem is raised, "How can a nation be brought to repentance?", and one finds this statement, "The world has suffered the agony of these last years because nations where Christianity has been preached for years did not act toward each other according to the principles of Jesus. Your pupils must be made to think in terms of national morality." The implications of these words are very far reaching; they might well lead to a consideration of many fundamental issues.

Aims found in the quarterly for the Intermediate group are clearly more liberal than the aims in the Junior and Primary quarterlies. This may be due to one or more of the following causes: (1) *The point of view of the writers.* The three quarterlies are written by three different persons. (2) *The subject matter studied.* It may be significant that the Junior material on the life of Christ exhibits the least liberal point of view. The Intermediates are studying Old

Testament material. (3) *The age of the pupils.* Perhaps the doctrinal emphasis in the Junior Department is due to a desire to teach Christian doctrine in preparation for the coming into Church membership which is often expected at the end of the Junior period. Also, it may be considered unwise to introduce pupils to the results of scientific study of the Bible before they enter the High School.

While the material in this series shows occasional hints of liberalism at specific points—especially in the use of the Old Testament for high school pupils—in general it is clearly traditional in character. Throughout the courses the emphasis is upon Bible knowledge of a rather undifferentiated type and upon generalized virtues as the expected outcome of such knowledge.

2. The International Graded Lessons

For the entire series and for the age groupings with which we are concerned in this study, objectives are stated as follows:

> The general purpose of the Graded Lessons is to meet the spiritual needs of the pupil in each stage of his development. The spiritual needs broadly stated are these:
>
> 1. To know God as he has revealed himself to us in his Word, in nature, in the heart of man, and in Christ.
> 2. To exercise toward God, the Father, and his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour, trust, obedience and worship.
> 3. To know and do our duty to others.
> 4. To know and do our duty to ourselves.

The purpose of the Beginners' lessons is to lead the little child to the Father.

The lessons for the Primary children seek to lead the child to know the heavenly Father, and to inspire within him a desire to live as God's child.

The lessons for boys and girls are planned to lead the child to become a doer of the Word, and to bring him into conscious relations with the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour.

The lessons for older boys and girls aim to present the highest possible ideals of Christian living, and to lead the pupil to accept Jesus as his personal Saviour and the Master of his life; to organize the conflicting impulses of life so as to develop habits of Christian service.

These objectives represent certain significant developments in the theory of curriculum-making in religious education. Not only is the principle of growth in experience and therefore the necessity of gradation explicitly recognized, but further than this, there is an extension of subject matter to include material other than Biblical. In addition, one finds that Christian activity is not simply to be taken for granted as a by-product of Christian knowledge but is deliberately planned for; thus, "to do our duty to others", "to become a doer of the Word", are among the aims of the series.

The expressed objectives are, however, not definitely liberal. They are too general and abstract. They leave us at a loss to determine the very things we want to know about the purposes of the curriculum. For this we must turn to an examination of the various courses making up the series.

Beginners

The emphasis in the aims of the two Beginners' courses is put on "knowing"—"knowing God", "knowing Jesus Christ", and "knowing about the heavenly home". It is apparently the conviction of the writer that to little children God should be presented as revealing himself primarily in the forces of nature—wind, sun, stars, rain and snow, etc.,—in his care of animals, and in his protection of humanity. The children are taught to "know" this God as Creator and Protector, and to respond to his protecting care by kindness, obedience, and trust. One finds no indication here of a conception of God as a loving Father who not only protects but who is continually at work creating an ideal society and is to be found wherever real fellowship exists.

The little children are led chiefly *to prearranged appreciations;* no effort is made to lead them to form their own standards by their own evaluation of experience.

There is no attempt to encourage them by means of actual experiences on the level of their capacity—for instance, their own experiences of negroes and Jews—to see through little children's eyes some of the great religious issues of the present day, such as inter-racial relations, war and peace, industrial justice.

Primary Courses (Grades I, II, III)

Elaborate aims are formulated for each year of the Primary group. The emphasis of the first two years

is on "religious feelings, love, trust, and obedience", and for the third year on activity "in reasoned obedience to awakening inner authority," and, "love and loyalty to Christ."

It is stated that:

> The results hoped for in the life of the child who completes this series of lessons are an awakened spiritual life, a sense of personal responsibility for right conduct, strong personal initiative in choosing the right and in serving and obeying God, and the foundation laid for Christian character. It is hoped that among the children to whom the lessons will be taught there will be some whom they will help to unconsciously become child Christians.

Are not these objectives based on the assumption that only a few children of this age are capable of being Christians and that even these should not know themselves as such?

The aims for the separate lessons are very similar to those for Beginners except that here a larger proportion of them are concerned with desirable activities of personal conduct and take such forms as, "To give the child the idea of what it means to be a friend to others and to arouse his friendly feelings toward his playmates".

In general there is lack of definiteness in the stated aims. This is, no doubt, due in part to the fact that they were intended to serve as goals for teachers working with groups of children in various unlike situations. That it may also be because the demands of Christian living were not related to concrete issues

is suggested by the fact that at one point at which the issue is clear, the aim is formulated with the greatest definiteness. This is in a "temperance lesson" where the aim is, "To lead the child [of eight!] to abstain from rich injurious food and from wines or any alcoholic liquor".

Although practically all the stories in these Primary courses are from the Bible, it is difficult to determine whether or not the controlling attitude toward the Bible shows liberal tendencies because in almost every case the aim of the Bible lesson has nothing to do with the Bible itself and all the Bible stories are used homiletically—that is, to throw light on the moral needs of children to-day. One can infer, however, that on the whole, the attitude toward the Bible is the traditional attitude. While the stories of Jesus' miracles are told with emphasis upon his helpfulness rather than upon his wonder-working power, there is no attempt to differentiate between narratives or to prepare for later critical study, for instance of the birth stories of Jesus and the resurrection.

With the exception of the question of prohibition, it is true for the children of this group as it was for the Beginners that the area of their religious activities is treated as decidedly limited. Is this limited area the world of childhood? Is it the religious world? If children are actually asking questions about the Bible and are concerned about its truthfulness and morality; if they are meeting industrial injustice and racial problems; then liberals believe—as has been indicated in earlier chapters—that it must be the pur-

pose of religious education to give guidance at these points.

Junior Course (Grades IV, V, VI, VII)

The general aim of the courses for grades four to seven is, "To help the child become a doer of the Word, and to lead him to conscious loyalty to Jesus Christ".

In these lessons, unlike those in the courses for younger children, attitudes toward the Bible and toward Christian belief are clearly indicated. The first lesson of the four courses is on the Creation. Its aim is, "To present the thought of God as the Creator of all things, the rightful ruler of the universe, and to establish in the child an attitude of reverence toward God as Creator, and toward nature as his work." Other aims representing traditional points of view are, "To associate the thought of God's promises with the rainbow, and to show that his part is to bless and that our part is to obey," and, "To show that the coming of Jesus was the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham".

One of the aims that concerns the missionary enterprise might be interpreted as liberal for it suggests discrimination. It is, "To show the need of the world for the gospel of Jesus Christ, and that it is the duty of those who have the Gospel to send it to those who have never heard of Jesus; to lead children to give to missions intelligently and cheerfully". In general, however, the traditional appeal to destroy the superstitions of heathenism is not combined with any appre-

ciation of Eastern cultures or with recognition of our own shortcomings. Apparently, the conception of medical missions as a bait for Gospel teaching has not been discarded. A liberal attitude on Christian missions can hardly be expected from children whose introduction to the missionary enterprise has been guided by such aims as, "To show the power of the gospel message to meet the needs of people bound by the strongest superstitions", and, "To show the importance of the work of the medical missionary and how it opens the hearts of the people and makes them willing to listen to Christian teaching".

The interest in helpful adjustments in social relationships which was found in the courses for younger children is continued and is enlarged to include problems of larger community welfare. Witness this aim: "To present an ideal of moral heroism through the deeds of men who worked patiently and risked their lives bravely for the welfare of others; to inspire the children with a desire to do some great work for humanity; to help them to see that even now there is something they can do to assist in guarding the health of the community, and to lead them to take advantage of such opportunities."

Several lessons have to do with peace, and we find such aims as, "To emphasize the glory and beauty of 'the things which make for peace', and to lead the children to act as peacemakers", and, "To show that peace is always better than strife and to lead children to do things which make for peace". It should not be assumed, however, that these lessons

present an effort definitely to outlaw war. To the second aim the following explanation is carefully added: "The only way to get peace sometimes is to fight for it, for there can be no peace when an individual, a group, or a nation is destroying life or property, or infringing in other ways for selfish ends upon the God-given right of their neighbors".

The aims that concern the "temperance" question are very definite. The children are to be led "to sign a pledge against the use of alcohol and tobacco". It is interesting to note the suggestion of a double standard of morality here. For the sake of their influence on boys, the girls (not the boys) are asked to add to their pledge, "I also promise that I will not include among my friends any boy who drinks intoxicating liquors or smokes cigarettes".

Courses for Older Boys and Girls
(*Grades VIII, IX, X, XI, XII*)

With the four courses in the Intermediate Department has been included *The World a Field of Christian Service,* intended for boys and girls about eighteen years old.

The purpose of the Intermediate courses is:

> To lead to the practical recognition of the duty and responsibility of personal Christian living and to organize the conflicting impulses of life so as to develop habits of Christian service.

On the whole, the aims of the lessons in these courses interpret Christian living in terms of personal

virtues—"loyalty", "helpfulness", "a forgiving spirit", "confidence in God", "faithfulness", "self-surrender", etc., etc. The virtues are taught, in most cases a virtue a Sunday, without much regard to the recognition of concrete situations in which the occasions for their exercise is found. It is true that in the lesson plan, a concrete instance may be suggested as a way to approach the subject matter but the end in view is the generalized virtue.

In the statements of aim there is a distinct emphasis on the individual. The following aims illustrate this: "To show the power and influence of a hero in our lives"; "To show that a life dedicated to God and a heart filled with assurance of salvation makes a leader of power"; and "To present the lessons in such a way that such personal dedication of self to God may be strongly suggested to each pupil".

The reason for this emphasis is probably found in the fact that nearly all the courses are biographical, biography conceived in the usual narrow sense. There is a lack of emphasis on group standards and their development.

Liberal tendencies are shown, it is true, in the large place given to considerations of social service. One entire course is given over to a discussion of vocations from the point of view of their contributions to society.

In the treatment of missions, the aims include a desire "to inspire a sense of universal brotherhood" and an "attitude of sympathy to immigrants".

The boys and girls are expected to "take a live

interest in the social work of the church". A fellowship beyond denominational bounds is clearly recognized. Thus, one of the aims is, "To lead the pupil to see that every Christian belongs to a larger fellowship than that of his own denomination and that he should seek to be a factor in knitting this fellowship more closely together".

When it was first published, nearly twenty years ago, no doubt the International Graded Lessons marked a great advance in curriculum-making. It was closely graded; it used material from other sources than the Bible; it stressed the influence of religion for right social relationships. Its purposes are, however, quite inadequate to equip children and young people for the tremendous tasks which Protestant liberals are demanding of the Christian religion. Indeed the realities of the modern world—the major issues of our civilization—are to a large measure neglected, prohibition being a conspicuous exception. The policy of postponement is adopted. Little children are to live largely in an imaginary, "ideal" world. Junior children are expected to know the stories of the Bible, and to "apply Bible truths" in their own enlarging personal contacts; they are not led to evaluate Biblical incidents or to interpret modern social life by the standards of Jesus. Older boys and girls are introduced to a larger world; but here the emphasis is on the qualities necessary for individual consecration to God and on expression of this consecration in service to the unfortunate rather than in social justice and

the reconstruction of society. Nowhere is there an effort to discover and analyze the factors in our present social order that deny the gospel of Jesus. There is no effort to enlist intelligent coöperation in bringing about the actual changes necessary in order to transform society into the kingdom of God.

3. The Scribner Completely Graded Series

In the pamphlet describing the courses this statement occurs:

> Each lesson in the Scribner Completely Graded Series, from the first lesson for the five-year-old pupil through the senior and adult courses, has in view some well defined advance in the pupil's moral and religious life. *The ideal of creating a thoroughly socialized world is kept steadily in view.* Beginning with the simplest acts of kindness and obedience in the family, it goes on to problems of school conduct, the relief of suffering, the spread of missions, training in worship and training in citizenship, so that each pupil may learn how to live as a true member of the kingdom of God.

The emphasis on the social nature of Christian experience needs no comment. Here we have an expression, in general terms, of course, of the purposes of liberal Christianity.

Upon first inspection the courses making up the series show a decided resemblance to those in the International Graded Series already reviewed. Here, as in the other series, little children are to be brought into relationship with a Heavenly Father who provides for them and cares for them. In the Junior

grades, the boys and girls study the Bible chronologically, with an aim for every lesson that seeks to apply to their needs the Scriptural passage studied. Courses for older boys and girls include biographical studies in which "the individual character receives the chief interest"; a study of the Biblical writers where the historical method is used and explained; a review of the entire Bible; and two courses dealing with problems of Christian conduct, the material for study being drawn largely from the Bible.

A study of the lesson aims in the various courses reveals distinctive features and indicates the direction in which the progressive purposes of the series are expressed. These distinctive features include:

a. The extension of the recognized scope of interests for little children to include personal contacts and problems not usually considered a part of children's religious life.

In the Beginners' course we find such aims as: "To develop a sympathetic and helpful attitude toward little newcomers in this country". And in the Primary courses, "To help the children to think that the bringers of food to their homes are God's helpers", and, "To extend the thought that God the loving Father is helping the doctor to care for his children and to arouse gratitude for all those who share in God's work." In a group of lessons for six year olds, the children are led to consider their social relations to such "helpers" as the miner, the doctor, the policeman, the letter-carrier.

b. Some emphasis even with young children on

sharing the social purposes of God. This is illustrated by the aims already mentioned and by the following: "To help the children to realize that the loving Father is working all the time to provide food for the needs of his children"; "To show that we are working with the heavenly Father when we are trying to be peacemakers", and, "To show the pupils that kindness to other persons brings us into fellowship with God".

c. Many indications of liberal attitudes toward social welfare and international relationships.

Throughout the series there is emphasis on community service and on high ideals of community life. Moreover, suggestions such as the following would surely lead to a reconstruction of the church's missionary enterprise: "Emphasize the fact that human nature is the same everywhere"; "This may be treated as a missionary lesson, showing the value of the right kind of missionary effort which seeks not to destroy but to fulfill." The aim, "To cultivate sympathy and friendliness rather than prejudice toward other races and nations", is typical of many lesson aims.

d. Both tolerance and independence of thought are expressely sought. It is unusual to find in Sunday-school text-books for High School boys and girls such purposes as, "To cultivate intellectual self-reliance and independence", and "To show that the truth thrives best in an atmosphere of freedom and thus to promote a spirit of tolerance toward those whose opinions differ from ours".

e. Young people of about sixteen are led to consider a variety of careers and among them marriage is

studied "as a Christian vocation" for both men and women.

f. The approach to the Bible throughout the series is historical and scientific.

At the five points indicated, liberal tendencies appear, and in these directions the Scribner Completely Graded Series marks an advance, from the point of view of liberalism, over the International Graded Lessons to which, in many other respects, it is similar. In no case, however, is a tendency developed definitely and in concrete detail in such a way as to bring out its full implications. Furthermore, there are interesting and significant omissions. For instance, little or no mention is made of problems concerning economic motives, industrial organization and conditions, political corruption, sex relationships.

As an illustration of failure to recognize and meet actual problems even when the general policy on a subject is liberal, the treatment of the Bible might be mentioned. While the significance of the general liberal attitude is very important, the fact must not be overlooked that in only a few lessons in the entire series (through the High School years) is there any attempt to handle directly the pupils' own critical problems.

In the Junior Bible, where the material is arranged with careful regard to the results of criticism and where there is an endeavor to forestall future difficulties, it is never the direct purpose of a lesson to consider possible present difficulties. For instance, when

the development of the early Christian community in Jerusalem is studied, instead of meeting questions on the tongues of fire and the disciples' sudden linguistic ability described in the story of Pentecost, the aim is, "To show the pupils how to enter into fellowship with God and at the same time strengthen in their hearts the desire to enter into that fellowship". In connection with the David and Goliath incident, the teacher is, "To inspire the boys and girls to conquer their own 'giants', to overcome bad habits, such as untruthfulness, and laziness, through God's help".

For the tenth grade, a course is offered on the Story of Our Bible. This course leads the students to study the history of the Biblical records, the purposes of the various writers and compilers, and the historical background of the narratives. The controlling point of view is clearly that of liberal Christianity. With this in mind, it is interesting to consider the announced lessons aims. A surprising number of them are in terms that bear no direct relation to critical problems; such as, "To cultivate the spirit of love and good cheer in the face of misfortune", and "To awaken in the pupils a boundless love and trust toward Christ, similar to the love for Him and trust in Him which swayed the lives of John and his fellow Christians". Several of them combine two objectives, as "To cultivate the power of seeing good rather than bad in one's environment. Also to give the key to the true understanding of the early narratives in the Old Testament". Only a few of the aims state clearly their purpose in terms of critical understanding, as, "To re-

view the story of the Bible and especially the Old Testament, from the point of view of the growth of the canon and thus to show clearly the true sense in which the Bible is an inspired book".

The Life of Jesus, intended for the eleventh grade, endeavors to clear the way for later difficulties, not expected to arise at this age. Here again, the liberal position is not consistently maintained. In his directions to the teacher for a very interesting lesson on miracles, the author contends that sixteen year old boys and girls have no intellectual difficulties with miracles. He says:

> The use of this lesson is to defend the pupils against future rather than present doubts. Young people of this age have not yet seriously faced the intellectual problem of miracles. All that the teacher needs to do at this period is to present the matter in a constructive way, and to show the class how they may, when they become more interested, face these problems without alarm and by the use of methods which they employ in other research.

The religious world of to-day is seething with questions concerning the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection. Here, if anywhere, young people need help. But in this course the Virgin Birth is not taken up at all. When the Resurrection is studied, the teacher is told that,

> The mode of the resurrection is the most controverted topic in modern Bible study. The topic is not one concerning which pupils of the age who are studying these lessons feel any special curiosity.

4. The Constructive Studies

When this series was planned, its purpose was to provide opportunity for thoroughly historical and scientific Bible study in the various grades of the Sunday School, day schools, and Christian Associations. The publishers' leaflet contains the following statement:

> It has been said of the "Constructive Studies" that it is a Biblical series. To a large extent this is true and should remain true until other educational agencies undertake to acquaint the church's children with the great literature upon which Christianity is historically based. A knowledge of the growth of religious ideas which produced Christianity leads to the enrichment of the Christian life, and while one may improve methods of interpretation of this literature and plans for presenting it, it must still remain the essential basis of the Sunday-school curriculum.

The extent to which the results of scientific Bible study are recognized varies greatly in the different courses. In the kindergarten, there is no indication of any change from the traditional approach. Many stories—such as the wedding at Cana, the Garden of Eden, Daniel in the lions' den—are told with apparently no attempt to deal with either present or future questions as to their literal accuracy or moral value. In the early years of the elementary school, there are some attempts to forestall future difficulties. For instance, when the creation story is told, the aim is, "To give the child a large though necessarily somewhat vague idea of creation, but to impress indelibly

the fact of God as Creator". For the fourth grade, a course is suggested which introduces the Bible as a whole. Here the gradual development of the religious life of the Hebrew people is clearly pointed out, and discrimination is encouraged. The course for the next year presents a simple, straightforward life of Jesus. Later in the elementary school, the young students are helped to share in a simple way, through the study of single books, scholarly methods in studying the Bible. The aim for the First Book of Samuel is, "To train the pupils in the proper way of approaching and using a book of the Bible; in short to teach them in a simple and practical way the art of interpretation as applied to such books as those of the Bible".

No attempt is made to defend the actions of people simply because they happen to occur in the Bible:

> Neither is it necessary to defend the falsehoods of the ancient Hebrews, or to represent as model characters all the persons who appear in the Biblical story, simply because they are mentioned in the Bible.

The contrast between Christian teaching and that of the Mosaic law is brought to the attention of children in the sixth grade:

> Point out that as Christians we are under a much stricter law. Polygamy, divorce for trivial causes, slavery, and hatred of enemies were all allowed by the Mosaic code, whereas all these things were forbidden by Jesus as well as everything else that disagrees with the practice of love toward all mankind.

In view of these distinctly liberal tendencies, it is somewhat surprising that the Resurrection is treated

with such extreme caution in the Life of Jesus for Juniors:

> The object of this is to bring out the story of the resurrection as clearly as may be, without attempting to explain what must be ever a mystery, or to determine the exact nature of the resurrection experiences. . . .
>
> . . . Owing to the complexity of the accounts, the teacher should present the story in some connected form rather than have the pupils get it for themselves.

The problem of the Virgin Birth is not dealt with directly at all although the Junior life of Jesus mentions Joseph as the father of Jesus, and speaks of "the idyllic character of these stories of the nativity". The life of Jesus for students in the ninth grade dismisses the problem with the following comment: "In the early chapters of Matthew and Luke there are certain difficulties which have long puzzled Christian scholars. It does not fall within the scope and plan of this book to discuss these difficulties".

Throughout the series, there is a conspicuous lack of concern with evangelical doctrines. There is no evidence that a conversion experience or a "decision for Christ" is expected at a special time. Also, the absence of traditional phraseology is more noticeable here than in the other series reviewed.

Objectives concerning social welfare and the reconstruction of society occur very seldom in courses for pupils below the high school. In the high school courses, we find a text-book on social ethics for boys, a course intended especially for girls in which important social problems are considered, and a short

course on eugenics. One of the questions introduced concerns the double standard of sex morality, "Is it right for a man to demand that his wife be purer than he is?" Women's public influence is discussed, "through organization in clubs, churches, settlements, labor unions, welfare stations, playground associations, civic and social centers, schools, and in many places, the ballot."

Only a few references are made in the entire series to missions or to problems of international and interracial relations. In general, these reflect the point of view of liberal Christianity and are represented by such expressions as the following:

> A knowledge of national life and customs of the immigrant is, therefore, quite necessary for a just understanding of the real character of these strangers who come to our shores. Men and women everywhere have a desire for the respect of others whatever their nationality. They do not feel justly treated when they are judged by the worst characteristics of their race.

It is true, however, that the pupils are never led to consider the facts of modern warfare. Indeed, kindergarten children are expected to learn "courage toward their country" through the story of Gideon, and are taught to play the "soldier boy" game and to sing this song:

> Soldier boy, soldier boy, where are you going,
> Bearing so proudly the red, white and blue?
> I'm going where my country to duty is calling;
> If you'll be a soldier boy you may go too.

5. The Beacon Course of Graded Lessons

The aim of this series is expressed in terms of social purpose, as follows:

> The Beacon Course in Religious Education has for its controlling purpose the promotion of the truly religious life. If, as a result of its use, there shall be a larger number of men and women in the world who are living purely, honorably, and reverently, and who are really helping to bring in the Kingdom of God, the Course will have accomplished the end most desired by those responsible for its inception and development.

In this series there is included as material for religious education a much larger range of interests than in any of the other series examined. The objectives, even for children below high school, include a recognition of wide social relationships and an appreciation of the religious contributions of men of science, industrial workers, great men of various religious faiths, leaders in social reform. The Biblical material usually studied is not omitted, but it is taken up in less detail than in the other series. In the other series it is often true that the same Biblical incident appears again and again, whereas in this series there is relatively little repetition of subject matter.

Through the third grade the courses are made up largely of legendary stories intended to furnish instruction and to present ideals for the child's guidance in his immediate relationships. Very few realistic stories are used. When the material is drawn from the

Old Testament there appears to be little variation from the traditional treatment. For instance, the story of the child Samuel is told to show "how a little child serving God faithfully, may hear the divine voice", and Joseph's going out to seek his brothers is expected to teach unquestioned obedience. In using stories from the New Testament, care seems to have been taken to avoid future difficulties. When the story of the annunciation is told, it is suggested that Mary had a dream in which a beautiful vision came to her. The resurrection story is to be told at Easter time "as a parable". Mary Magdalene is said to have had a vision of Jesus. "Then", the story goes on, "Mary felt that Jesus was not dead—that he had given up his life with them only to enter upon a better one".

This approach for little children to much discussed portions of the New Testament record is unusual. So also is the consistent emphasis on skill in social relationships, on learning to coöperate, characteristic of the text-book, *Living Together,* intended for children in the second grade.

Distinctive features of the Beacon Course are conspicuous in the books for the Junior grades. The course for the fourth grade, *God's Wonder World,* deals with "the religious aspect of nature and of social relations" and includes a brief survey of the long evolution of physical life. Man's progress is discussed, with chapters on printing, steam, electricity. All this to be considered lesson material for the religious education of nine year olds! The course for the fifth grade, not yet in print, is an introduction

to the entire Bible, a study of "how the Bible came to be written, and how it has come down to us". In the sixth grade, the course is on *Heroic Lives,* and in the heroic company we find Moses and David, Zoroaster, Mohammed, Buddha, Jesus, Socrates, Paul, Martin Luther, Dorothea Dix, Dr. Walter Reed, and Alice Freeman Palmer. The course ends with a section on "Heralds of Universal Religion" in which are included representatives of the Brahma Somaj in India, Bahaism in Persia, and the Unitarian movement in America.

For the eighth grade this series provides a life of Jesus which attempts to encourage appreciation of his life and teaching and at the same time to avoid doctrinal emphases and historical misconceptions. It is worth while to note the treatment of the birth stories and of the Resurrection.

The aim of one of the lessons taking up the stories of the birth of Jesus is—"To furnish a basis of knowledge about them which will enable the pupils to understand their origin at the very same time when they are learning to love them". And in her introduction to this section the author says:

> The four lessons of this chapter deal with the beautiful stories which were told concerning the birth of Jesus and John the Baptist after both had become famous men. Every great religion has similar legends about its leaders, as we shall see. The poetry and symbolism of our gospel narratives is woven into the celebration of Christmas day. Their beauty and charm are part of our great religious heritage which we may enjoy the more because we know

them to be poems, born out of the wonder and awe and love of devoted human hearts.

The author further speaks of the accounts of the Resurrection as "stories which contradict each other at many points, which present angels and apparitions of dead bodies, so that we know they cannot be history".

These stories are the efforts made by sincere people in a credulous age, when miracles were readily accepted, to explain their faith in immortality and their confidence in the spiritual kingdom for which they labored.

. . . Our Easter faith, then, rests on the conviction that the spirit of Jesus was too worthy to perish, that his influence is deathless; that the Christ spirit in the human heart is an abiding reality; and that in the same way that his spirit is alive, we shall live also.

A liberal point of view in regard to traditional doctrines that have grown up about the person of Jesus is further evident from the following quotation:

Jesus lived his gospel, and showed the world how completely the divine life may be revealed in a human life. What he was, therefore, has had a vast influence on his followers. In no one point is there so great divergence among the churches which accept his teachings, as on this concerning the nature of Jesus and the meaning of his death.

The essential thing to remember about this divergence is that *opinion or belief about Jesus is not what makes a Christian or a member of the Kingdom of God.* The teaching of Jesus and the spirit which he manifested (we have come to call it the Christian spirit) together constitute

the religion of Jesus; and they are truly his followers who have in their hearts the spirit of love, which is the spirit of God, as he had it, and let that love influence all their actions and their thoughts.

There are two text-books already prepared for high school students—a course on the apostolic church and a course entitled *Our Part in the World* in which a wide range of problems is discussed, problems of national and international citizenship, social institutions, public hygiene, and the like. In this course are such questions as "Is war ever right? Do we want a martial type of character? Do you believe in the saying, 'My country, right or wrong'? 'Might makes right'; is this ever true?"

6. The Christian Nurture Series

The purpose of this series is given as "development of loyalty to the Church; a fostering of inner, spiritual life; and constant practice in helpfulness."

Active interest in social welfare is one of the outstanding features of the Christian Nurture Series. It is at this point that we find the only clear indication of liberalism in the entire series. Suggestions for acts of helpfulness are made for nearly every lesson in all the courses, various lessons take up the lives of social reformers, and, in the high school, an entire year is spent in the discussion of social problems. The aim of the high school course is to look at the pupils' own community as Jesus would see it, to learn "what we can do to further the things which He would approve, and how we can get rid of the things He would de-

plore". In no other series is there so definite and practical a course in community service for high school students.

There is less emphasis on knowledge of the Bible in this series than in any of the other series we have examined thus far, although one scholarly text-book on the entire Bible is provided,—for the tenth grade. While the point of view varies in the other books, on the whole, the traditional attitude is maintained. We find such lesson aims as, "To show God's loving care of Noah", and, "To appreciate the birth of Christ as being a new beginning of Life by miraculous 'Birth from Above' as well as a consummation of all preceding evolution".

Throughout all the courses the Christian Nurture Series throws great emphasis on the church and on traditional Christian doctrines.

Except for an occasional lesson on church going and rather infrequent references to the work of the church and to fellowship among different denominations, the other series are inclined to neglect the subject of the church entirely. Not so here. In this series, the church is referred to again and again, and is in many cases the center of whole groups of lessons. Apparently the objects sought, are knowledge of church doctrines and participation in the worship and organized life of the church. There are no traces whatsoever of liberal tendencies in regard to the church, no attempt to evaluate the historic institution in terms of the world's need, no effort to encourage initiative and experiment. The emphasis is on conservation and

conformity, not upon advance. "Loyal compliance with the institutional customs of the Church" is mentioned as one of the aims of the entire series. Some of the aims for separate lessons are: "To suggest that the Church is God's home"; "To point out that before there were any churches or parishes, the apostles and disciples were obedient and loyal to Jesus Christ in doing exactly what He told them to do, and that we can be loyal and obedient to Him by being loyal to the Church and doing His work in it"; "To help the class [nine years old] to understand that the Holy Catholic Church is for all people, at all times, in all places".

Bound up with insistence on the importance of the church found in this series is the emphasis on doctrine. One year of the high school is given over to rather elaborate discussions of the articles of the Apostles Creed, the stated aim for the course making the extraordinary announcement that science must be interpreted by theology. This is what we find:

> This course aims to show to the pupil of High School age that religion is essential to the interpretation of all other facts, and that knowledge of the scientific truths which are being taught him is not the Truth until the explanation is provided for them by a sane and simple theology.

Among the lesson aims are these: "To show the power of a creed held not only by the mind but by the heart and will"; "To get clear of childish conceptions of the Trinity and to provide at least a clue for thought, notwithstanding its awesome mystery".

That younger children are taught to take certain definite attitudes toward matters of doctrinal belief is clear from such aims as the following, found in elementary courses: "To help the children to understand that Baptism is necessary to all people"; "To show that the Creed is the foundation of the Church".

Concern for better international relationships expresses itself chiefly in the purpose of establishing the Protestant Episcopal Church in different parts of the world. Characteristic aims are: "To show the class how men are willing to undertake the greatest hardships to carry the Church wherever the flag flies"; "To show why the Church is needed in China"; "To show the class their individual responsibility in sending the power of the Church to South America".

Military metaphors are used very frequently, many of them referring directly or indirectly to the baptismal formula where the priest says:

> We receive this Child into the congregation of Christ's flock; and do sign him with the sign of the Cross in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner, against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end.

In many of the courses the children are reminded of the experience of their baptism and are encouraged to be good soldiers of Christ. Conquests of the church are mentioned without criticism. Nowhere is there an attempt to evaluate war as a method for settling disputes.

7. The Abingdon Week-Day Texts in Religion

Limitations of space allow only a brief mention of some of the outstanding features of this series.

The volumes for younger children do not differ essentially in point of view from the majority of text books for younger children in the other series examined. They seek to develop general attitudes of trust, obedience, kindness, and the exercise of these attitudes in the children's immediate surroundings. Biblical material is used—quite uncritically—as well as stories from other sources. The one striking feature of these books for Primary children is that a larger number of realistic stories of modern life are included than is customary. This may be the beginning of a significant change.

For older boys and girls, books on the Bible are provided, emphasizing historical and geographical background and utilizing results of research. A book on the history of the church prepared for the tenth grade marks a new departure in curriculum material for high school students.

While the general attitude toward the Bible is both scholarly and ethical, no preparation for the teacher is suggested to help him meet problems concerning the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, the descent of the Holy Spirit, although the traditional accounts of these phenomena appear in several courses. These and other records of the miraculous are not emphasized; neither are they discussed and explanations sought.

An unusual number of courses deal with problems

of individual and social standards. While the tendency seems to be toward discussions of generalized qualities—desirable qualities for leadership, friendship, etc.—and while there is little attention given to actual conditions and problems, occasionally present social issues are directly discussed. For instance, in one of the high school courses, *Jesus' Ideals of Living*, the following questions are suggested for class discussion: "Do you think that public or private schools give a larger opportunity for broad friendship?"; "Who is responsible for our lynching in the South and elsewhere?"; "What is the true Christian ideal of property ownership?"

Some attention is given to problems of citizenship. The importance of voting wisely is stressed, as well as the importance of obeying the laws of the community. On one occasion, America is condemned for injustice to the Indians. It seems to be true, however, that in general the series tends to magnify nationalist sentiments. Such statements are found as this:

> The more we think about "America the Beautiful" the more we realize that we have established on this Western continent something unique which other nations have copied and which more and more will become the ideal of the world.

There are no suggestions in any of the courses for the abolishing of war. In *Jesus' Ideals of Living*, the Great War is very definitely justified, our late enemies are spoken of as "immune to kindness and all other ideals", and it is said that war may be "conducted

absolutely in the spirit of the Prince of Peace". No opposition to this point of view is expressed in any of the other text-books.

8. The Pilgrim Plan Books for Week-Day Religious Education

Five books have been published in this series, four for children in the primary department, and one for Junior children. They are made up of stories, songs, games, suggestions for hand work, short plays, and plans for service activities.

The general purpose of all the books is much the same. For the Mayflower Program Books it is stated as follows:

> To develop in children of Primary age appreciation of all people near and far who contribute to their happiness and a spirit of comradeship and sympathetic helpfulness for any less favored; to provide practice in service.

And for the Juniors:

> The purpose of the Junior Citizen is to develop an attitude of helpfulness toward all people in all lands. It aims to train girls and boys to be good citizens and friendly neighbors in the community, our country, and the world.

These are missionary courses if missionary education can be defined as growth in fellowship and understanding between people of different environments. No doubt they would tend in the direction of abolishing war although the problem of what to do in the case of international disputes is never actually raised.

The books do not give information about the Bible

nor develop attitudes toward it; only a very few Bible stories are told. Nor are the pupils encouraged to visualize in any adequate fashion the industrial system of the present day with its many serious problems. Upon the issues treated, however, the purposes are distinctly in accord with the demands of liberal Christianity.

Summary

A brief comparative survey of these eight series reviewed gives us a picture of the present situation in curriculum objectives for Protestant religious education. Conspicuous in the situation are the following elements:

(1) *Only a limited use is made of the results of Biblical research.* In courses for little children the traditional approach is only slightly modified. For Junior children we find a wide variation, all the way from a purely traditional treatment (as in the International Group-Uniform Series) to an attempt (in the book studies in the Constructive Studies) to give practice in the use of the historical method. Nearly all the series include a course on the structure and history of the Bible. No one of them—with the single exception of the Beacon course—deals critically with the two most generally discussed problems in the use of the New Testament, the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection.

(2) The Christian Nurture Series stands alone in its emphasis on formulas of belief. *Absence of attention to traditional Christian doctrines is an out-*

standing feature of all the other series although phraseology usually associated with doctrinal conformity appears rather frequently in the two International series.

It is interesting to compare at this point the attitude expressed in curriculum objectives with the purposes of interdenominational organizations for religious education reviewed in the last chapter, where the outstanding attitude toward doctrine was found to be positively conservative. The following considerations suggest themselves in this regard: (a) Do leaders expect to teach doctrine outside of the curriculum, through revivals, confirmation classes, "personal work", etc? (b) How will children in whose education a study of Protestant doctrine has been neglected be equipped to deal with the doctrinal problems now prominent in all the churches?

(3) *All the series emphasize social work.* They all include lives of leaders in social service. Several of them have vocational courses, and one series offers a course on community problems. *In general, however, they emphasize relief rather than the analysis and reform of definite social abuses.* Prohibition is a notable exception.

(4) *Internationalism expresses itself chiefly in a desire for the spread of Christian missions*—an objective in which nearly all the series share. Several of the series seek to encourage a fraternal rather than a benevolent attitude toward the population of the "mission fields"; but nowhere is there a realistic treatment of the *facts* of the missionary enterprise.

Religions other than the Christian religion are sympathetically treated in only one series. Present international problems of imperialistic aggression, overpopulation, political dictatorship, etc. are rarely touched upon. Any hint of protest against war is found in only one course among all of those studied—approximately ninety in all!

(5) One set of courses, the Christian Nurture Series, centers itself around a study of the church—conceived of in rather mediæval fashion. *For the most part the other series neglect the church, referring only occasionally and incidentally to its work.* If the church is to become a useful agency for reconstruction—and liberals are convinced that this is its function—must not children participate heartily in an examination of its history and present status?

(6) *In conclusion we repeat that the outstanding impression resulting from a study of curriculum objectives concerns the number and significance of their omissions.* They pass over very briefly, postpone, or neglect entirely to consider many of the most insistent demands of liberal Christianity. Some of these have been mentioned. Others concern the ethics of politics, forms of social organization, industrial conditions, the status of women. If the purposes of curriculum material are to represent the points of view of liberal Christianity, the following limitations must be recognized and remedied: (*a*) The restricted area for which curriculum objectives are at present conceived; (*b*) hesitancy to assume a realistic attitude toward the world (especially in the case of material

for younger children); (*c*) the policy of postponement by which problems of Biblical interpretation and social reconstruction with which children are immediately concerned are not directly attacked but are postponed until it is presumably "safer" to deal with them.

CHAPTER VII

The Competency of Religious Workers to Deal with the Objectives of Liberal Christianity

To a very large extent the success of organizations for religious education and the effectiveness of curriculum material depend upon the workers who are in first-hand contact with the children and young people of this generation. It is, therefore, essential that some effort should be made to discover whether our Protestant religious workers are prepared to deal with the facts and standards involved in the liberal movement. Do they know the already established facts in regard to the Bible, the Christian church, the structure of society,—facts upon which any reconstruction of religious education must be based? What are their attitudes toward social issues with which liberal Christianity is concerned? We need to know, not simply to guess, the information and attitudes of religious workers on such matters as: the use of the Bible in modern life, facts about the life of Jesus, the importance of religious dogmas, standards of sex relationship, war and peace, the organization and control of industry, property ownership, freedom of speech.

An investigation of the sort required is not altogether easy to make. Religious workers are busy people and proverbially slow about answering their mail; many of them resent questionnaires; a considerable number of them hesitate to put themselves on record upon contested points. It was found possible, however, to interest various groups of workers, drawn from all parts of the United States, in a series of statements, each of which they were asked to consider and to mark *True* or *False*. A list of one hundred such statements was constructed on the basis of (1) a study of recent religious literature, (2) a preliminary try-out with about seventy-five liberal ministers, and (3) conference with a small group of advanced students in religious education. Later, several of the statements were found to be vague or ambiguous, and eight of them were disregarded in the scoring of returns. The ninety-two statements on which we have opinions were divided into four groups of twenty-three statements each. Twenty-three of these statements were concerned with the Old Testament;[1] twenty-three with the New Testament; twenty-three with the nature and purpose of the Christian religion; and twenty-three with matters of social ethics. Arranged in the chance order in which they were used, the statements were as follows:[2]

[1] In the Old Testament group were included a few general statements on the Bible.

[2] A large number of these statements call for sheer knowledge, not opinion, but it is knowledge which liberals emphasize. The only knowledge test in religious education that is in any degree standardized is Professor M. T. Whitley's

1. The expectation of Christ's speedy return dominated the lives of the early Christians.
2. It is the business of the Christian Church to take an active part in social reforms.
3. The book of Isaiah contains writings from at least two different authors.
4. The Ten Commandments present the whole duty of man.
5. John, the son of Zebedee, was the writer of the Fourth Gospel.
6. A Christian is well defined as a person who believes in Jesus Christ as God and Saviour.
7. All Jews will try to get the best of a bargain even if they have to cheat to do it.
8. Baptism was instituted by Jesus.
9. The Church is Christian only in so far as it seeks actually to live out the belief that God is our father and that all men are brothers.
10. The Apostles Creed is found in the Book of Acts of the Apostles.
11. It is a misfortune for any cultivated young woman to have to earn her own living.

Biblical Knowledge Test on the Old Testament (Series A), and it may be questioned whether her test measures knowledge of the Old Testament that is important from the standpoint of liberal Christianity. A comparison of scores made by a group in her test and their scores in the Old Testament portion of the set of statements given here (where 20 out of the 23 statements were items of information and the other three concerned points of view based on ascertainable data) yields a small negative correlation. The coefficient is —.069. This would indicate the necessity of constructing a test other than Professor Whitley's to measure the Biblical information that is important for liberalism.

12. At the heart of Jesus' teaching was his desire for an ideal community based upon justice and good will.
13. The essential duty of society towards one who has been justly convicted of crime is to see that he suffers for his wrongdoing.
14. All the Bible writers believed in immortality.
15. Although some persons take advantage of our industrial system to gain unworthy ends, at bottom our industry is organized on a fundamentally Christian basis.
16. Christianity must remain forever hostile to any form of science which tends to destroy accepted dogmas of the faith.
17. The development of the Christian celebration of the Lord's Supper was influenced by the custom of the Mystery Religions.
18. We must never expect to find anything good in non-Christian religions.
19. The way in which work is carried on in most of our large industrial plants tends to destroy freedom and initiative on the part of the large majority of workers.
20. Jesus' teaching endangered the established society of his time.
21. In order to protect the future of the race the law must demand a higher standard of sex morality from women than from men.
22. If the Christian religion is to be permanent, it must have capacity for perpetual development.
23. Faithful prayer has the power to alter natural laws.
24. The Christian Church should seek to abolish all public Sunday recreation.
25. The New Testament was originally written in Hebrew.

26. In the time of Jesus, Palestine was a thoroughfare between commercial centers.
27. There are different conceptions of the Resurrection of Jesus among the New Testament writers.
28. Helping a fellow student in a written test so that he may remain in college and play on the football team shows loyalty to the college.
29. It is more important for a young man who wants to be a Christian to "play fair" in a game of baseball on Saturday than it is for him to give up playing baseball on Sundays.
30. Although it is wrong to deceive good people, in dealing with liars one is sometimes justified in using their methods.
31. If an able-bodied person does not earn sufficient wages to support himself in decency, no one is to blame but himself.
32. Only an unbeliever questions whether the miracles of Jesus happened just as they are recorded.
33. St. Mark was the earliest of the four Gospels.
34. The account of the raising of Lazarus appears only in the Gospel of John.
35. For Jesus the main test of discipleship lay in belief in his miracles.
36. Children are able to help in the making of important family decisions.
37. Some women, whose husbands are able to support them, are nevertheless justified in holding regular paid positions.
38. The conception of God remains unchanged throughout the Bible.
39. Education is the imparting of knowledge.
40. The Old Testament story of the Garden of Eden was derived from a tradition common to several Semitic peoples.

41. The Gospel of John was written after the Acts of the Apostles.
42. Any true Christian who is asked for money by a crippled beggar in the street gives him at least a little.
43. What a person eats or drinks is nobody's business but his own.
44. When the Hebrews conquered Canaan, they adopted some of the Canaanite holy places and forms of worship.
45. The God of Israel was first thought of as a tribal deity.
46. Fellowship among Christians should be based upon agreement in doctrinal statements.
47. It is a religious duty to learn the laws of health and to apply them.
48. When war is declared the churches should be at least as ready as other community forces to rally to the support of the government.
49. Any hope for the progress of civilization in the Western world rests upon some form of international co-operation in which all nations have a share.
50. It is impossible for a man to have a normal religious life if he works twelve hours a day in a factory.
51. The account of Moses' hearing God speak from the midst of a thorn bush reflects the primitive idea that deities resided in certain trees.
52. It is worse for a rich man to sell worthless stock than it is for a hungry man to steal a loaf of bread.
53. A democratic political system requires for its success a democratic economic system.
54. In the King James' version the books of the Bible are arranged in the order in which they were written.

55. The Maccabees were the leaders of a revolt against Christianity in the first century after Christ.
56. Protestants and Catholics have nothing in common.
57. The first chapter of Genesis gives the true history of creation.
58. The Apostolic Church was much influenced by Greek thought.
59. Children five or six years old are capable of a Christian experience of God.
60. The conquest of Canaan by the Israelites was gradual, following upon its settlement.
61. While intelligent Christians will welcome Jews who may care to join the Christian Church, they will regard with equal respect and good will those who choose to remain faithful to Judaism.
62. The Song of Deborah is one of the oldest portions of Hebrew literature.
63. Man is by nature neither wholly good nor wholly bad.
64. God expresses himself in and through our own human relationships.
65. The real supremacy of Jesus is found in the kind of life he lived rather than in the manner of his birth.
66. Jesus had to die in order to satisfy divine justice.
67. The highest form of prayer is that in which we forget all human relationships and are alone with God.
68. The majority of school histories of the United States need to be rewritten, with less emphasis on war and more emphasis on scientific and industrial life.
69. The first five books of the Old Testament present a combination of accounts from different sources.
70. A Christian is a person who knows his Bible and goes to Church regularly.

71. Paul makes frequent reference in his writings to the miracles which Jesus performed.
72. The political administration of Solomon was distinguished for its justice and mercy.
73. The control of black and yellow races by white races is justified by the inherent superiority of the whites.
74. The Gospel accounts of the birth of Christ contain legendary material.
75. If a student is trained to be more accurate in mathematics he will be more accurate also in weighing political issues.
76. A true Christian will never seek to compare the Bible with other books.
77. It is clear that some of the prophetic passages in the Book of Revelation referred to events happening in our own day.
78. All of the four Gospels were written within fifty years after Jesus' death.
79. One of the aims of Christian missions should be the development of native churches which can dispense with all foreign control.
80. The organization of the churches must be changed before they can effectively illustrate in their corporate life the social ideals which they proclaim.
81. The Hebrews were fulfilling the will of God when they destroyed the inhabitants of Jericho.
82. Moses wrote the Pentateuch (*i.e.*, the first five books of the Old Testament).
83. The Bible accepted by the Roman Catholic Church contains certain books not included in Protestant Bibles.
84. When on the day of Pentecost the disciples "spoke with tongues", in reality they spoke in different languages.

85. In America every boy of unusual intelligence has a chance to become a prominent citizen.
86. When the very life of the nation is threatened, the conscience of an individual should conform to the necessities of national defense.
87. Nearly all the Psalms were written by David at different times in his life.
88. Although the Hebrew legend tells us that the Ten Commandments were miraculously given to Moses on Mt. Sinai, in reality they represent a stage in the development of Jewish moral law.
89. The main interest of the prophets was in foretelling miraculously events which other people could not know about.
90. The miraculous element in some of the Biblical stories was due to a tendency to glorify popular heroes by attributing to them superhuman powers.
91. School teachers should be prevented by law from expressing opinions which in any way criticize present social or political affairs.
92. Christianity must be at variance with a civilization in which two per cent of the people own sixty per cent of the property.

Answers were scored from the liberal point of view, the "right" opinion being determined by a consensus of the groups coöperating in preparing the test. In scoring, the usual practice was followed of subtracting the number of wrong answers from the number of right answers.[3]

[3] For a discussion of the construction of a true-false test see William McCall, *How to Measure in Education,* pp. 123-133.

Although in some cases groups were reached by mail, in general it was found to be most feasible to give the test to religious workers assembled in training schools or summer conferences. Reports were obtained from workers in the following groups; unless mention is made to the contrary, approximately the entire membership of each group reported.

Group A— 57 reporting—Members of two summer conferences for church workers.[4]

Group B— 26 " —Students in a denominational training school.

Group C— 53 " —Students taking religious education in a university summer school.

Group D— 28 " —Students in a course in the summer school of the Young Women's Christian Association.

Group E— 37 " —Recent graduates of a denominational training school for church workers.[5]

Group F— 61 " —Students in a course in religious education in a theological seminary.

Group G— 14 " —The student body of a small divinity school.

Group H—109 " —Students in three courses in religious education in a professional school of graduate rank.

[4] Parts of two classes in two conferences.

[5] Of the 42 women graduated in the last 6 years, 37 reported. This is the same training school in which Group B are students.

Group I— 24 reporting—Members of the council of a Christian organization — The Fellowship of Reconciliation.[6]

Group J— 42 " —Members of a graduate class in religious education at the end of a year of specialized study.

Group K—114 " —Miscellaneous. Here are grouped together single papers and returns from small groups of Sunday School teachers and other religious workers.

Total number reporting—565.

All the students in these groups were practical workers in the field of religious education. For the purpose of comparison, the test was also given to 108 undergraduates in an eastern college all of whom had had some special training in Biblical history. Their scores are included with the report of the other groups in the distribution table on page 166.

All the groups used for this study were under more or less progressive influences. This fact should be remembered in estimating the results. These are progressive people, probably among the ablest and best informed of the younger religious workers in America.

Several points in these general scores are worthy of note:

(1) The facts essential to liberal Christianity and the attitudes characteristic of liberalism are not universally possessed by Protestant religious workers. They cannot be taken for granted. The median score

[6] Twenty-four out of the 30 members reported.

Scores on the Entire 92 Statements

Scores	Groups A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	TOTAL RELIGIOUS WORKERS	COLLEGE UNDERGRADUATES
—12 to —4 ...	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	0
—4 to 4 ...	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	13	1
4 to 12 ...	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	10	0
12 to 20 ...	3	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	7	14	0
20 to 28 ...	7	1	6	1	0	2	0	4	0	0	11	32	1
28 to 36 ...	14	3	9	1	1	3	0	2	0	0	18	51	5
36 to 44 ...	8	3	5	6	5	2	0	5	0	0	11	45	11
44 to 52 ...	9	9	5	4	7	4	1	10	0	2	8	59	22
52 to 60 ...	2	3	3	8	10	8	2	7	2	1	14	59	18
60 to 68 ...	2	1	4	2	1	14	2	13	3	3	12	57	20
68 to 76 ...	0	0	13	4	6	13	5	19	1	5	7	73	19
76 to 84 ...	0	3	3	2	4	9	4	30	5	8	7	73	11
84 to 92 ...	0	0	3	0	2	6	0	21	13	23	8	76	0
Total	57	26	53	28	37	61	14	109	26	42	114	565	108
Median	31.7	46.7	51.5	54	56	67.1	71.5	73.7	84.6	84.7	45	59.3	58.2

of the 565 workers tested is 59.3. Letting the median represent the group, we can say that approximately 16 out of the 92 statements were answered "incorrectly" from the liberal point of view by the entire number of workers tested. In the case of Group A, members of summer conferences for church workers, approximately 31 of the 92 answers were incorrect—over one-third.

(2) The wide differences between groups and within the membership of a given group should lead us to be very cautious in assuming that there is any uniformity of opinion among religious workers upon these matters. It also suggests difficulties of practical adjustments between individuals and groups. Diagram A (page 168) shows a striking comparison of three curves—the curve representing the entire group tested and the curves of Group A and Group J, the two groups having the lowest and highest scores respectively. Note also the wide scattering of the scores of Groups B, C, E and H shown in the distribution table.

(3) Apparently specialized training is an important factor. Group J, a graduate class with specialized training in religious education, has the highest median of the groups tested.

(4) On the other hand, nearly as high a median is found in the case of Group I, the council of a radical religious organization, most of whom had no specialized training in religious education. Probably other selective factors are at work here. At any rate, it looks as if the possession of liberal information and

attitudes did not as a matter of fact depend solely upon taking special courses.

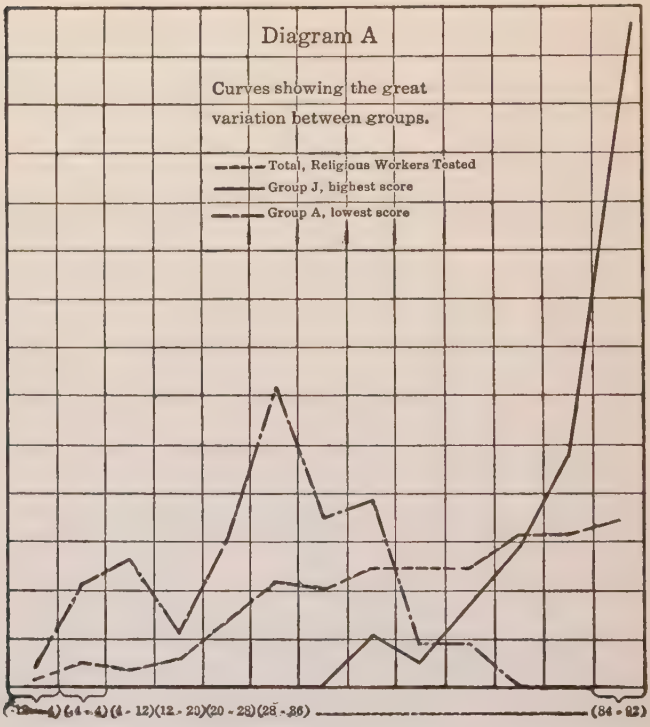
Diagram A
Curves showing the great variation between groups.
Total, Religious Workers Tested
Group J, highest score
Group A, lowest score
(64 - 92)

(5) The averages of Groups A, B, C, D, and E fall below the median of the total scores of the church workers tested and below the median of the college undergraduate group. One may infer, therefore, that the majority of the members of these groups are not

Scores on the 23 Statements on the Old Testament

Groups	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	TOTAL RELIGIOUS WORKERS	COLLEGE UNDER-GRADUATES
Below —2	4	2	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	10	19	0
—2 to 0	6	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	11	19	0
0 to 2	6	0	8	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	3	21	0
2 to 4	4	1	3	1	2	1	0	2	0	0	5	19	0
4 to 6	3	1	2	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	10	21	0
6 to 8	7	1	4	2	1	2	0	6	1	0	10	34	0
8 to 10	7	3	4	5	0	3	0	2	0	0	6	30	0
10 to 12	7	1	5	4	2	4	1	4	2	1	9	40	3
12 to 14	5	4	3	3	4	3	1	5	0	4	4	36	3
14 to 16	3	5	1	4	6	4	0	6	2	3	7	41	7
16 to 18	3	3	4	1	8	8	3	12	1	3	8	54	22
18 to 20	0	1	6	4	6	9	5	12	3	3	12	61	24
20 to 22	1	1	6	1	5	14	2	26	5	11	6	78	31
22 to 23	1	3	5	0	2	11	2	28	10	16	13	92	18
Total	57	26	53	28	37	61	14	109	24	42	114	565	108
Median	7.6	14	11.4	11.5	16.6	18.8	18.8	19.9	21.2	21.1	10.4	16.1	19.6

Scores on the 23 Statements on the New Testament

Groups	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	TOTAL RELIGIOUS WORKERS	COLLEGE UNDER-GRADUATES
Below —2	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	10	17	1
—2 to 0	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	10	1
0 to 2	9	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	14	5
2 to 4	5	1	9	2	1	0	0	2	0	0	11	31	9
4 to 6	8	2	7	4	4	2	0	6	0	0	13	46	4
6 to 8	13	4	6	1	5	2	0	7	0	1	15	54	10
8 to 10	6	8	3	4	4	5	0	0	1	1	10	42	13
10 to 12	3	7	1	4	5	3	1	13	1	1	12	51	9
12 to 14	1	0	5	1	6	7	1	10	0	1	9	41	11
14 to 16	1	2	6	4	1	7	1	13	2	3	4	44	14
16 to 18	1	1	3	2	6	9	1	13	4	4	5	49	12
18 to 20	0	0	7	3	0	13	3	17	3	8	7	61	9
20 to 22	0	1	2	0	5	10	6	18	8	12	7	69	8
22, 23	0	0	1	2	0	3	0	9	5	11	5	36	2
Total	57	26	53	28	37	61	14	109	24	42	114	565	108
Median	5.1	9.5	9	11	11.8	17	19.3	16.4	20.3	20.3	8.4	12.9	12.4

Scores on the 23 Statements on Christianity and the Church

Groups	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	TOTAL RELIGIOUS WORKERS	COLLEGE UNDERGRADUATES
Below —2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	1
—2 to 0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	5	0
0 to 2	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	7	1
2 to 4	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	10	1
4 to 6	5	1	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	6	16	1
6 to 8	6	6	5	0	4	3	1	4	0	0	8	37	3
8 to 10	11	3	6	2	2	3	3	0	0	0	6	36	10
10 to 12	13	6	4	3	6	9	1	7	0	0	15	64	19
12 to 14	6	3	5	5	6	9	2	7	1	2	17	63	19
14 to 16	3	1	3	8	7	6	2	10	3	0	11	54	20
16 to 18	4	1	12	6	2	12	2	22	2	4	13	80	17
18 to 20	1	2	8	2	4	6	2	23	0	8	13	69	11
20 to 22	0	1	4	2	4	8	1	21	9	11	6	67	4
22, 23	0	0	3	0	0	4	0	15	9	17	5	53	1
Total	57	26	53	28	37	61	14	109	24	42	114	565	108
Median	9.7	10.3	16	15	13.5	15.8	14	18.4	21.3	21.3	12.9	15.5	13.9

Scores on the 23 Statements Concerning Social Ethics

Groups	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	TOTAL RELIGIOUS WORKERS	COLLEGE UNDER-GRADUATES
Below —2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5	0
—2 to 0	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	6	0
0 to 2	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	8	3
2 to 4	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	3
4 to 6	4	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	5	13	6
6 to 8	3	2	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	8	18	13
8 to 10	8	2	4	2	3	4	0	6	0	0	11	40	10
10 to 12	8	4	5	4	2	4	0	7	0	0	21	55	10
12 to 14	5	3	5	2	4	7	2	4	0	1	9	42	18
14 to 16	7	3	8	2	7	11	0	10	1	3	14	66	11
16 to 18	6	3	9	3	5	8	4	19	0	1	9	67	16
18 to 20	3	2	12	5	6	13	2	17	5	7	10	82	10
20 to 22	0	2	7	1	4	9	3	22	3	12	13	76	7
22, 23	0	0	2	7	3	4	3	23	15	18	6	81	1
Total	57	26	53	28	37	61	14	109	24	42	114	565	108
Median	10.1	12	16.7	17.3	15.9	14.8	19	18.9	22.4	21.5	12.9	16.7	13

prepared to meet present religious issues from the point of view of liberal Christianity.

The returns, classified under the four subheadings into which the list of statements was divided, appear in the distribution tables on pages 169 to 172.

A study of the classified scores suggests these conclusions:

(1) Liberalism in one set of statements does not guarantee a similar degree of liberalism in the other divisions. There is great variety in the curves. Group A is more liberal on social questions than upon the New Testament. Group E is more liberal on the Old Testament than on the New Testament. Group C is more liberal on Christianity and the Church than on the Old Testament. And Group G is distinctly more liberal on Social Ethics than in the interpretation of Christianity and the Church. All this is illustrated in Diagram B (page 174).

(2) In general, the workers tested are less well equipped upon the New Testament questions here used than upon the other sets of questions.[7]

What is the meaning of this relative ignorance and conservatism upon matters concerning the New Testament? Are the results of scientific research less available here than in the case of the Old Testament (as, for example, on Question 5, John the son of Zebedee was the writer of the Fourth Gospel)? Is public opinion in the churches against considering the New

[7] It is not claimed that the questions are of equal difficulty. This is not necessary in order to get an unambiguous picture of the situation.

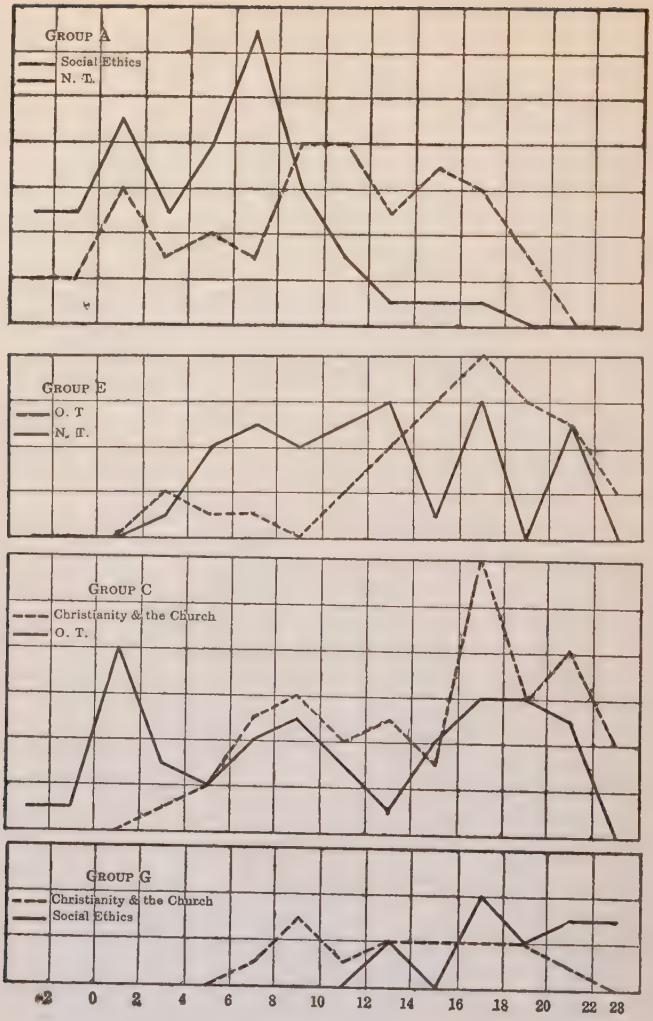
GROUP A
Social Ethics
N. T.
GROUP E
O. T
N. T.
GROUP C
Christianity & the Church
O. T.
GROUP G
Christianity & the Church
Social Ethics
-2
0
2
4
6
8
10
12
14
16
18
20
22
23

Diagram B

Testament with the same open-mindedness with which the Old Testament is approached? (*e.g.*, Question 74, The Gospel accounts of the birth of Christ contain legendary material). Have doctrinal teachings based on certain assumptions concerning the New Testament established such fixed mental habits as to inhibit free inquiry? (*e.g.*, Question 6. Baptism was instituted by Jesus). Is there some relation between these low scores on the New Testament and the fact brought out in the preceding chapter that most text-books for church schools avoid a direct approach to controversial questions in which the New Testament is involved?

(3) Unlike most of the groups, Groups F and G, students in two theological seminaries, are more liberal on the Old Testament and the New Testament than upon questions concerning either the functions of Christianity or social problems. In view of these scores, one is justified in seeking an explanation for the apparent fact that these groups are in a more liberal educational environment where the Bible is concerned than in regard to other important elements of liberal Christianity. It would be interesting to discover whether this condition is general in progressive seminaries.

A study of the opinions held by the various groups on a few of the single statements among the ninety-two presented reveals certain general tendencies as well as significant differences between groups.

Do these groups accept literally the Old Testament story of creation? Their positions on this point will indicate at least to some degree whether or not in their

teaching of the Bible they are making use of widely known results of scientific research. Statement 57, *The first chapter of Genesis gives the true history of creation,* was marked *True* by

33.3%	of	Group	A
15.4%	"	"	B
39.6%	"	"	C
25.0%	"	"	D
13.5%	"	"	E
13.1%	"	"	F
14.3%	"	"	G
11.9%	"	"	H
8.3%	"	"	I
4.8%	"	"	J

Obviously, the traditional, unscientific position is still held by many religious workers, even those under progressive influences. More than a third of the students taking religious education in a university summer school (Group C) fail to question the historical accuracy of this ancient myth.

Essential to the liberal point of view on the Bible is the conviction that it represents a progressive revelation of the nature of God. This issue is fundamental in determining treatment of Biblical material. Statement No. 42 reads *The conception of God remains unchanged throughout the Bible.* This statement was challenged, that is, it was marked *False,* by most—though not by all—of the religious workers tested.

63.2%	of	Group	A	marked it *False*
88.5%	"	"	B	
88.6%	"	"	C	

92.9% of Group D
97.3% " " E
98.4% " " F
100.0% " " G
97.3% " " H
100.0% " " I
100.0% " " J

From a liberal point of view these results are distinctly encouraging. Although the amount of ignorance in Group A is striking, we can expect that on the whole these workers will discriminate in their handling of the various and sometimes conflicting ideas of God found in the Bible.

Do Protestant workers accept literally the Gospel stories of the birth of Jesus—with their emphasis on angelic appearances, a wonder-working star, and miraculous conception—or do they share the convictions of liberals that legendary elements have been introduced into the narrative? Statement No. 74, *The gospel accounts of the birth of Christ contain legendary material* was marked *True* by

35.1% of Group A
50.0% " " B
50.9% " " C
82.1% " " D
40.5% " " E
73.8% " " F
92.9% " " G
83.5% " " H
83.3% " " I
95.1% " " J

On this point there was a wide divergence of opinion between members of summer conferences (Group A) and the student groups. Note also the difference on this point between the two groups in theological schools (Groups F and G); and the relatively low scores made by the graduates of a denominational training school (Group E) as well as the students attending the same training school (Group B).

The majority of the church workers tested believe that John the son of Zebedee wrote the Fourth Gospel. This makes it probable that they fail to discriminate between the historicity of the events narrated in this Gospel and those found in the synoptics. Statement No. 5, *John the son of Zebedee was the writer of the Fourth Gospel,* was marked *True* by

70.2%	of	Group	A
92.3%	"	"	B
58.5%	"	"	C
53.6%	"	"	D
67.6%	"	"	E
31.2%	"	"	F
21.4%	"	"	G
51.4%	"	"	H
16.7%	"	"	I
21.2%	"	"	J

The four groups in which less than 50% of the membership are convinced that the Gospel was written by the disciple John have a total membership of only 141 out of 451 in all the special groups.

Is a Christian to be defined by his belief in the deity of Christ? Such certainly is the traditional posi-

tion. Liberals on the other hand maintain that the best definition of a Christian is not in terms of doctrinal assent but in terms of social function, of character. Statement No. 6, *A Christian is well defined as a person who believes in Jesus Christ as God and Saviour,* was challenged,—that is, marked *False,* by

54.4%	of	Group	A
61.5%	"	"	B
47.7%	"	"	C
46.4%	"	"	D
45.9%	"	"	E
50.3%	"	"	F
28.5%	"	"	G
71.6%	"	"	H
75.0%	"	"	I
88.1%	"	"	J

On this point there are interesting conflicts of opinion. 75% of the members of the council of the Fellowship of Reconciliation (Group I) discarded the traditional viewpoint, while 71.5% (Group G) of the membership of one of the progressive seminaries accepted it as true. Church workers meeting in a summer conference were about evenly divided, 54.4% marking it *False* and 45.6% *True.*

The function of Christianity in society depends to a large extent upon the question as to whether or not the characteristic practices of religion are regarded as capable of interrupting the operation of scientific laws. It is noteworthy that over forty per cent in several of the groups tested believe that prayer can alter natural laws. Statement No. 23, *Faithful prayer*

has the power to alter natural laws, was accepted as *True* by

43.9%	of	Group	A
42.3%	"	"	B
26.4%	"	"	C
3.6%	"	"	D
43.3%	"	"	E
19.7%	"	"	F
42.9%	"	"	G
11.9%	"	"	H
16.7%	"	"	I
2.4%	"	"	J

We cannot expect religious workers to join heartily in the purposes of liberal Christianity for the reconstruction of our industrial civilization if they see nothing radically wrong in the present organization of industry. To Statement No. 15, *Although some persons take advantage of our industrial system to gain unworthy ends, at bottom our industry is organized on a fundamentally Christian basis,*

52.6%	of	Group	A	answered *True*
53.8%	"	"	B	
30.2%	"	"	C	
28.6%	"	"	D	
37.8%	"	"	E	
18.0%	"	"	F	
21.4%	"	"	G	
23.9%	"	"	H	
None	"	"	I	
2.4%	"	"	J	

It is surprising to find among church workers the persistence of the idea of a double standard of sex

morality. A few of the workers tested—more than 25% of Group A—are in favor of more severe laws for women sex offenders than for men. The returns on Statement No. 21, *In order to protect the future of the race, the law must demand a higher standard of sex morality from women than from men, are as follows:*

26.4%	of	Group	A marked this *True*
19.2%	"	"	B
7.6%	"	"	C
10.7%	"	"	D
None	"	"	E
10.0%	"	"	F
7.1%	"	"	G
5.5%	"	"	H
None	"	"	I
None	"	"	J

Two statements concern the relation of the church and of individual Christians to the problem of war between nations.

Has the church of Christ any distinctive standards? Should it criticize—as the prophets did—the actions of a whole nation, even in the event of a national moral act such as the declaration of war? Has it a distinctive function among community organizations in bringing to bear upon every action, national as well as individual, the standards of Jesus?

With Statement No. 48, *When war is declared, the churches should be at least as ready as other community forces to rally to the support of the government,* the groups tested are in overwhelming agreement. Only the members of Group I unite in

dissenting. The four groups in which over 60% of the membership disagree with the statement have a total of only 82 members.

66.7%	of	Group	A marked it *True*
92.3%	"	"	B
54.7%	"	"	C
75.0%	"	"	D
70.3%	"	"	E
42.6%	"	"	F
21.4%	"	"	G
43.1%	"	"	H
None	"	"	I
23.8%	"	"	J

Whether, in the event of war, an individual's conscience is to employ a specifically Christian standard is considered in Statement No. 86, *When the very life of the nation is threatened, the conscience of the individual should conform to the necessities of national defense.* Here again, a large proportion are in favor of directing one's conscience by the standards of the existing state rather than by other motives (for Christians presumably the teachings of Jesus). The returns are as follows:

68.6%	of	Group	A marked it *True*
80.3%	"	"	B
45.3%	"	"	C
60.7%	"	"	D
54.1%	"	"	E
47.1%	"	"	F
35.7%	"	"	G
45.0%	"	"	H
None	"	"	I
23.8%	"	"	J

Limitation of space prevents further discussion of returns. From this brief survey, however, it is evident that the essentials of liberal Christianity, as here defined—including requisite information and attitudes—have not become the property to any large measure of the Protestant religious workers available for this inquiry. Moreover, these are the people, if there are any, who should show the effects of the liberal movement. They do not show either a firm grasp of items of historical knowledge that are essential nor the attitudes toward life which liberalism is supposed to develop. The mass of religious workers over the country are no doubt even less well prepared to carry out the purposes of liberal Christianity.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

The outline of the distinctive positions of liberal Christianity presented in Chapters I and II led us to recognize certain objectives as essential to the task of Christian education undertaken from the liberal point of view. These concerned the relation of the religion of Jesus to significant social issues, and were grouped for convenience under the ten headings suggested—the Bible, Theological Dogmas, the Historical Jesus, Social Welfare, the Reconstruction of Society, the Political State, International and Inter-racial Problems, Human Nature, the Educational Process, the Church.

In the attempt to answer our main questions, *To what extent has Protestant religious education adopted the educational objectives implied in the liberal movement?* evidence has been drawn from three sources—(1) leading writers in religious education, (2) denominational and interdenominational agencies for religious education, and (3) curriculum material used in the church school. Finally, a brief investigation was made of workers in religious education to discover whether they are prepared to deal with the facts and standards involved in the liberal movement. The results of these various lines of inquiry have been noted. Beyond question, the picture of the present situation

which they present is not that of a system of education efficiently adapted to spread among the people either the ascertained knowledge, which is one factor in liberalism, or the religious attitudes and conduct that liberalism implies. The people at large cannot be expected to be better educated than their leaders. Nor can we expect that the Protestant community as a whole will assume responsibility for the radical reconstruction of society implied in liberalism until the organizations directing educational policies and the text-books that influence both the teacher and the taught represent more adequately the purposes of liberal Christianity.

That the purposes of liberalism are not now widely active in controlling the life of American Protestantism is glaringly apparent from such well known facts as the following. Premillenarianism flourishes, and men and women in large numbers are abandoning any expectation of reconstructing the world by ethical processes. A recrudescence of opposition to evolution is widespread and is taking many forms, from attacks on a museum of natural history to legislative efforts to abolish the teaching of evolution in our schools and colleges. Talk of heresy trials appears frequently in our newspapers. On many sides there is earnest and forceful affirmation of unscientific and pre-critical views of the Bible and of Christian doctrines. Indeed, nearly every Protestant denomination is witnessing within its ranks some upflaming of bigotry and intolerance.

We are in a situation where such things as these

happen. One of the reasons that they are possible is obvious from the foregoing study. It is evident that opportunity is not being given for people generally to know better. Even in religious bodies made up of the intellectually favored and in groups considered progressive, the items of knowledge and the religious attitudes essential to liberalism are not being taught. Liberals themselves have apparently assumed that it was enough to emphasize certain aspects of religion previously neglected (such as social welfare, and international brotherhood) without meeting squarely the issues now alive in Protestantism or raising other issues of immense importance.

The constructive suggestions that grow out of this study stand forth with perhaps obvious clearness.

1. Religious education must give more attention to facts as facts. Facts about the Bible must be made available for the people at large, for children as well as adults. It is no less important to take into account ascertained social facts in which human welfare is concerned.

2. Not only must the scientific attitude of open-mindedness and inquiry be consciously followed by leaders in religious education but scientific methods of analysis and inference must be introduced into the teaching of religion for all ages. This will necessarily involve the development of a technique for the study and evaluation of social problems as they arise in specific situations.

3. Liberal religious education must seek to develop new appreciations of the way of life taught by Jesus

and new moral sensitiveness to the relation of his teachings to present day life.

4. Investigations and experiments looking toward the reconstruction of the whole plan and process of religious education must be conducted, including studies of curricula, organizations, and the status and growth of individual pupils. Instruments of measurement should be prepared and standardized—for diagnostic uses, to estimate the results of the teaching of religion, and to make possible the comparison of one school or process with another.

5. If the foregoing suggestions are followed, we may expect to see a radical revision of the announced purposes of religious education. They will no longer be formal and static, expressed in generalities, more or less the same year after year. On the contrary, the objectives of religious education will develop out of specific recognition of present issues and the deliberate weighing of present facts by the principles of Jesus. The various boards and agencies will become more plastic; as they seek to modify current events in definite ways they will themselves be modified thereby. Text-books will be rewritten, much of the present material being discarded and replaced by discussions of the great issues of our time. Teacher-training classes will become groups investigating together facts of tremendous social importance and learning together methods of evaluation and skill in social action. A like process will become operative in groups of children, even very young children.

As an illustration of the changes to be expected,

consider a single issue, that of war between nations. At present most of the organizations for religious education fail to give any recognition to this issue, although some of the text-books extol a peaceable spirit and many of them seek to inculcate in their readers a generalized amiability and kindliness. In religious education representing liberal Christianity this policy will be reversed. Christian organizations will investigate the facts of the late war, the causes leading to war, the proposed efforts to abolish future conflicts; and on the basis of the teachings of Jesus they will seek to bring about certain definite changes in regard to this issue. Text-books will discuss how war is actually fought, the cost in men, in money, and in other ways, the work of the war department in time of peace, the significance of military training camps, and the like,—thus developing a realistic understanding of the actualities of war. Groups of teachers, of young people, of little children, will bring to bear upon ascertained facts the principles of Jesus, and on the basis of that impact will form their own conclusions and act accordingly. As obviously necessary as all this will seem to be, it is not being done at the present time. The issue chosen is simply a convenient illustration of the practical working out of liberal religious education upon a specific point.

These suggestions indicate some of the directions of reconstruction that are necessary if the organized religious education of the future is to represent the educational purposes implied in the liberal movement.

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